A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

AFTER CHERNOBYL – FACTS AND THOUGHTS

NEW TIMES

MAY 9: THE LESSONS OF ALLIED RELATIONS

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REFORM, OPENNESS AND THE PRESS

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BORROWING FROM THE COMPUTER

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

"The dreamer in the Kremlin" is how the English writer H.G. Wells described Lenin after meeting him in October 1920. The rich imagination of the author of "The War of the Worlds" and "The Invisible Man" could not accept the picture of the future painted for him by the founder of the world's first socialist state. Lenin spoke of the electrification of the country, of covering it with a network of new roads and railways, of building a modern industry. All that Wells saw around him at that time were factories and plants standing idle, half-wrecked cities, boarded-up shop-windows, broken pavements and ragged, hungry people.

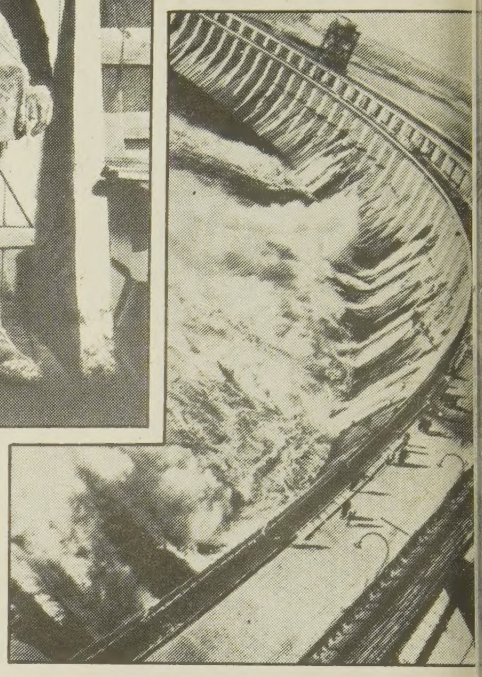
Nevertheless the writer heeded Lenin's advice and visited the U.S.S.R. again, this time in 1934. By then Lenin's plan for the electrification of the country had been carried out. Wells saw the Moscow subway being built, he visited an operating factory, talked with the People's Commissar of Education, was shown the plan of new construction in Moscow, and he met Academician Ivan Pavlov. No, Lenin had not been an idle dreamer. His plans were confidently being translated into life.

In those years the era of the five-year plans was ushered in. In order to survive, and in a hostile encirclement to boot, the young state had to build an advanced industry of its own.

Industrialization became the watchword of the first Soviet five-year plan which began in 1929. The republic had to start practically from scratch. It was still a predominantly agrarian country. It had no automobile, tractor or machine-tool industries. Before the revolution, even bicycles were imported. No help from outside could be expected, and much had to be built and in a short time. The first five-year plan set the task of building 1,500 new projects.

The country in those years was one huge construction site. New cities and giant factories sprang up. These were the now legendary years of the Dnieper Power Plant at Zaporozhye and the Turkestan-Siberia Railway, the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk iron and steel works, the Urals engineering works, and tractor plants. Projects on a scale hitherto unknown in Russia were built sometimes on unbroken ground, and with a minimum of technical equipment. After all, the factories that were to produce the machinery and other industrial equipment were yet to be built.

En route for the construction site.

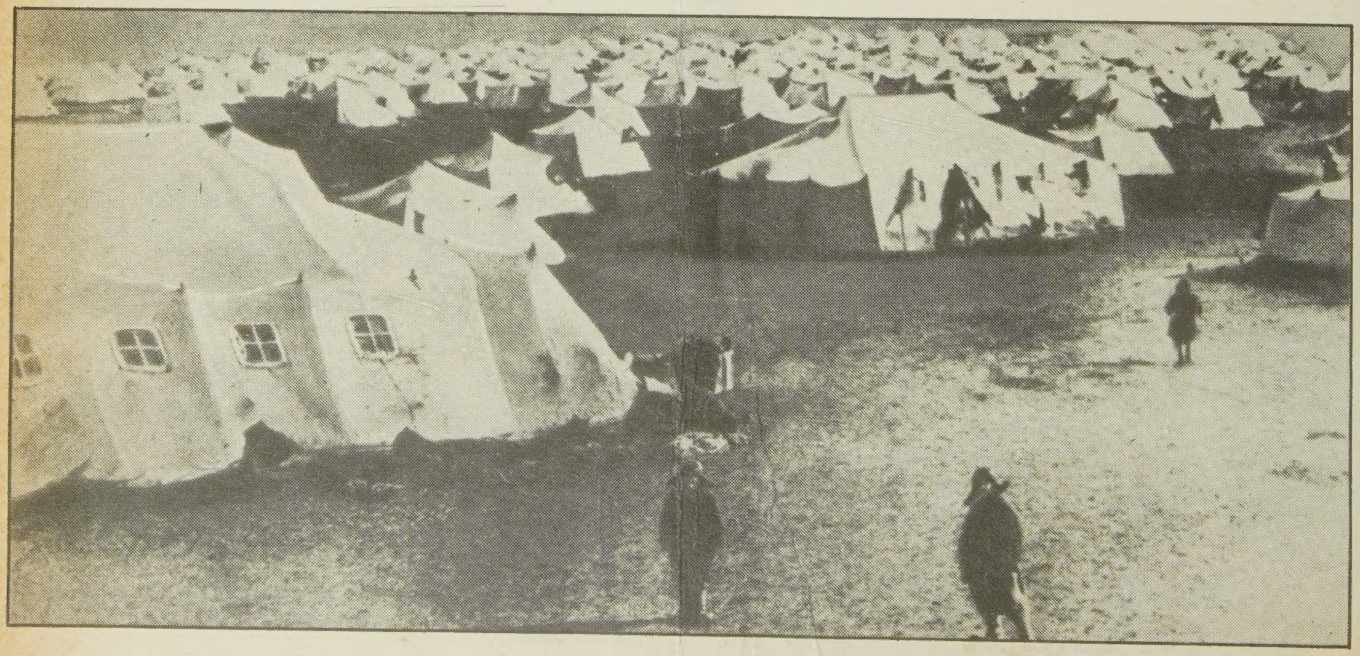


The first Magnitogorsk settlement. 1929.

The Dnieper Power Plant dam. 1932.

It was not only incredibly hard work, it was also a labour of joy. After all, it was for the first time that the people themselves were building their country's future literally with their own hands. What rejoicing there was when the first Soviet-made tractor, the first truck came off the production line!

The first five-year plan was fulfilled in four years and three months. The Soviet Union laid the foundations of a powerful industry in an unbelievably brief space of time. In November 1932 the American journal Nation wrote that the four years of the five-year plan had yielded truly astounding results. The Soviet Union had worked with the intensity of a war effort on the building of the foundations of a new life. The face of the country was changing literally beyond recognition, the journal said.



A SOVIET WEEKLY
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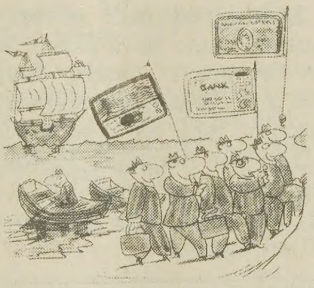

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NEWSPAPERS AND OUR TIME
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FROM OUR MAILBAG

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A few words in support of the Soviet government's effort to eliminate medium-range missiles in Europe. Indeed, discussions in the F.R.G. as to what to do, whether to abolish the Pershing 2 missiles completely or turn them into Pershing 1s, can only provoke disgust on the part of every normal person who doesn't want to burn to death in the flames of a nuclear holocaust. Wouldn't it be better to find a really serious solution for Euromissiles, in order to settle the question once and for all! After all, international stability throughout the world, Europe included, depends on it.

GUNTER KRAUSE
Cologne, F.R.G.

●

I am 17. I want my children, when I have them, to see only peaceful skies overhead and never fear the threat of nuclear war. That is why I denounce the U.S. for its aspiration to military superiority. It's time it saw how absurd it is. The more so as I think most Americans have long stopped believing superiority can be won.

ERNESTO COLLADO VILLALOBOS
Camagüey, Cuba

●

Recently some former political leaders, especially in the U.S., have been only too pleased to divulge to the world the secrets they could not talk about when in power. They "fearlessly" accuse their governments of unseemly activities and report machinations in which they themselves were implicated. These "revelations" only confirm the axiomatic truth that for those at the helm of an imperialist state it is hard to keep their honesty and common sense.

BRUNO MORELLI
Milan, Italy

EDITORIAL

A MINUTE OF SILENCE

The human memory is limited. One can forget, he can be afflicted with amnesia, pathological loss of memory. To paraphrase a well-known maxim, some people can forget some things, others, other things, but all people cannot forget everything. Indeed, besides the individual's memory there is the collective memory, the memory of the nation and the entire human race.

The second world war, which ended in Europe 42 years ago, is one of those events that both the individual and the whole human race remember. Should anyone forget the war, something is sure to remind him of it, be it the rustle of the grass in some quiet army cemetery, the knell of Khatyn and Buchenwald, the empty windows of the Stalingrad mill preserved in its ruined state as a silent witness to the great battle fought there, or a TV sequence showing a nazi butcher, who enjoyed asylum in the U.S. for decades, furiously resisting when bundled into the aircraft that will take him to the place of retribution.

The present revives memories of the past. We are alive today and hope to be alive tomorrow—provided we take account of the lessons of the past war and do our utmost to avert the threat of a new war before it is too late.

Yes, before it is too late. On the eve of the second world war humankind was oversanguine hoping that time itself would work for peace. Alas, time was on the side of the aggressor. Hoping to channel aggression eastward, Western politicians only brought disaster on their own peoples. Only after June 22, 1941, was the vital need for joint action, a common struggle, realized.

Whose side is time on today? Today civilization is threatened with self-destruction. It is a threat that menaces everyone. We must eliminate nuclear arms before they eliminate us. Yes, before it is too late. Today that is our gravest concern.

No wonder we so profoundly admire men and women dedicated to the struggle for the survival of humankind. Only recently the International Lenin Peace Prize was awarded to another five people—thinkers, politicians and churchman—Julius Nyerere, the eminent fighter for Africa's liberation, Herbert Mies, the West German Communist leader, Pyotr Tanchev, the Bulgarian politician and statesman, Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin, a leading British scientist active in the peace movement, and Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann, a Sandinist diplomat. Some of them remember the war, some don't. Some are in power, some have experienced harassment. But the very fact that they are all so different gives inner strength and dynamism to the great struggle the peoples are waging against the nuclear threat, for the survival of humanity.

On May 9, a minute's silent remembrance will be observed—worldwide—provided the Pentagon does not carry out another nuclear test on that day. The 50 million dead will mutely ask children and grandchildren what they have done to prevent the recurrence of all that misery and grief. Everyone must answer. The great socialist community whose lifestring Hitler's hordes tried in vain to sever, offers a clear answer, one that was as clear on May 9, 1945, as it is today.

The will for peace must be translated into action for peace.

THE LESSONS OF ALLIED RELATIONS

VALENTIN BEREZHKOV

Is the past experience of Soviet-American cooperation applicable today! After all, today too our peoples have a common enemy...

As we observe Victory Day, our thoughts turn to the heroic years of the Great Patriotic War, to the feat of valour performed by the Soviet people in upholding the freedom and independence of their homeland. In this titanic struggle we were not alone. Together with us in the battle against the dark forces of fascism and militarism were the fighting men of the United States, Great Britain and other united nations.

The relations of alliance that emerged in the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition were a historic example of cooperation between countries with different social systems. This was conclusive proof that despite differences of ideology, political institutions and economic order, there can be mutual understanding and joint action even in the trying conditions of war.

The decisive factor of victory was the cooperation on the battlefield of the two principal members of the coalition —the Soviet Union and the United States. It was founded on equality and respect for each other's position. In this sense the lessons of the Soviet-American allied relations are of topical value today as well.

From Roosevelt to Truman

It will be recalled that for 16 years after the October Revolution the U.S. ruling quarters refused to recognize the world's first socialist state. It took the common sense and farsightedness of President Roosevelt to end this anomaly. It is symbolic that the normalization of relations between the two biggest powers of our time coincided with the seizure of power in Germany by the Hitler clique. The restoration of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. laid the groundwork not only for their subsequent joint action against the common enemy but also for the postwar settlement.

President Roosevelt attached particular importance to the latter aspect. As far back as the autumn of 1943 U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, on a visit to Moscow, conveyed to Joseph Stalin a message from Roosevelt containing the President's ideas about the postwar peace settlement based on mutual understanding between the great powers, primarily the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Roosevelt already foresaw that there would be opposition to this.

Commenting on the President's message, Hull told Stalin that "if the powers waited until the end of the war to formulate a basic foundation for a postwar international programme, peoples in all the democracies would go their separate ways. Their disagreements would become more serious, and various elements, groups and individuals would take advantage of this. Under such circumstances it would be very difficult—for the United States at least —to pursue a suitable postwar programme, and to rally and unite the forces needed to support it. The situation at the moment was entirely different: any official in the U.S., however high his rank, would be immediately discredited and thrown out of office if he announced that he opposed working out a postwar programme."

It was these elements that even while the war was still going on tried to complicate the relations between the allies. They seized upon every pretext for delaying the opening of the second front, disrupted the agreed timetables for the delivery of military supplies and equipment to the Soviet Union, and engaged in secret negotiations with nazi emissaries. They were out to weaken both of the principal belligerents with a view to dictating American terms of the peace settlement when the war ended. As long as he lived, Roosevelt foiled— although not always vigorously enough —the intrigues of the opponents of postwar cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union, sought to strengthen the foundations of the relations between the two great powers, which, he foresaw, would emerge from the war as the most powerful and influential countries in the world.

The wartime conferences in which Roosevelt took part—Teheran and Yalta —were of great international significance. The decisions of these conferences underscored the exceptional importance of the unity of the big powers in the conduct of the war and in the organization of the peace, and showed that fruitful cooperation between countries with different social systems was possible. It is in place to recall that in his report to Congress on March 1, 1945, on the results of the Crimea meeting of the Big Three Roosevelt stressed that never before had the main allies been so closely united not only as

An unforgettable meeting of Allies in 1945.

TASS photo

regards the aims of the war but also of the postwar peace.

Why is it that the character of the relations that evolved in the course of the war between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. was not preserved? History shows that as a rule allies in wars part ways after victory. In the given instance, however, excesses and confrontation could have been avoided had Roosevelt remained at the head of the United States in those initial, most difficult, postwar years.

After his death and the advent of Harry Truman in the White House in April 1945, U.S. policy swerved sharply from cooperation to confrontation with the U.S.S.R. Priority was given to a policy of American dictate in the postwar world. The advocates of this policy, both Democrats and Republicans, found an ardent supporter in Truman. After all, he was the one who, while still a Senator, put forward immediately after Hitler Germany attacked the Soviet Union this thesis: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible."

As Truman subsequently admitted in his memoirs, it was only by inertia that he entered into agreement with the Soviet Union at the Potsdam conference. He attached no particular importance to the fact that this conference adopted decisions of fundamental importance for the future of the postwar world, that its outcome confirmed once again that mutual understanding between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. was possible.

Truman had other objectives in view. As he crossed the Atlantic aboard the cruiser Augusta carrying him from a devastated Europe to the shores of an America that had battened on the war, Truman made up his mind to bar the Soviet Union from any participation in establishing control over Japan. Force, he thought, was the only thing the Russians understood. Truman was, above all, thinking of the atom bomb which by that time had already been dropped on Japanese cities. The U.S. ruling circles counted on retaining the monopoly on the atom bomb for a long time and using it to blackmail the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.

When in September 1945 the council of the foreign ministers of the anti-Hitler coalition met for its first session in London, John Foster Dulles, that notorious cold warrior who attended as an observer, was able o declare with satisfaction: "At that moment our postwar policy of 'no appeasement' [meaning no cooperation with the Soviet Union—**V.B.**] was born; and, on the whole, it has been adhered to ever since. Our action at the London meeting has had momentous consequences—as we realized it would have. It marked the end of an epoch, the epoch of Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam... The fact that I was at London with Secretary Byrnes as a Republican and with powerful Republican backing enabled me to play an important part in the momentous decision to end the policy of seeking to get agreement with the Russians."

Forgotten principles

However, U.S. expectations of a long-term monopoly on the atom bomb did not materialize. The advocates of military adventures had to readapt urgently. Washington's numerous plans aimed at striking nuclear blows at the Soviet Union had repeatedly to be scrapped in face of the increasing Soviet ability to retaliate.

The policy of subsequent U.S. administrations towards the Soviet Union was in large measure determined by the correlation of strength within the country between the supporters of a more realistic policy and the ultra-right elements. The possibility of reaching agreement appeared and disappeared accordingly.

Since the war the Soviet Union and the United States have succeeded in a number of cases in reaching agreement both in the political sphere and in the field of disarmament. The treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, and others were drawn up with the direct participation of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. Fifteen years ago, in May 1972, the Basic Principles of relations between the two powers were signed in Moscow by the top leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. This document contains such important provisions as the principle of the peaceful coexistence of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. irrespective of differences of ideology and social systems; the mutual commitment to avoid military confrontation, to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war, to exercise restraint; readiness to negotiate and to settle differences by peaceful means in the spirit of mutual respect for each other's positions and mutual advantage; recognition of the security interests of both, based on the principle of equality and renunciation of the use or threat of force; recognition that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with the objectives proclaimed by both powers, etc.

Observance of these principles could have opened the way to a long period of détente, to relations of peaceful coexistence and mutually advantageous cooperation. But they have been completely forgotten by Washington.

Personal contacts between the leaders of our two countries are of great importance. It is noteworthy, however, that whenever an opening appears for improvement of Soviet-American relations, whenever preparations for a summit meeting are under way, the opponents of agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. try to poison the atmosphere. Remember what happened in 1960 during the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower when, on the eve of a planned meeting at summit level, a U-2 spy plane was sent into Soviet air space. As a result, the summit meeting was wrecked. In 1972, just before President Nixon was due to arrive in Moscow, the American army command carried out a massive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. And before the summit meeting in Vienna in the summer of 1979, Washington found nothing more appropriate than to confirm the decision to adopt the new strategic MX missile for service. At the same time, a provocative clamour was raised in the U.S. over the alleged presence in Cuba of a nonexistent "Soviet brigade." Shortly before the Geneva summit in November 1985, President Reagan's speech-writers indulged in a particularly vicious outburst of anti-Soviet rhetoric. On the eve of Reykjavik a veritable witches' sabbath was staged over the so-called "Daniloff affair." And quite recently, just before Secretary of State George Shultz's visit to Moscow, another outburst of spymania was organized.

Mortimer Zuckerman, the editor of the political journal U.S. News and World Report, writes in its April 27 issue for this year: "There is a lingering feeling among Americans, particularly conservatives, that sooner or later the Soviet Union intends to use its military strength to threaten the very essence of the American way of life, American liberty and American democracy, in the name of a communist ideology. The popular phrase is 'The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!' Americans insist that the U.S. remain strong militarily lest any weakness in American power tempt the Soviet Union to expansionist policies. They are also cautious about the Soviet government because there is a feeling that the U.S.S.R. has taken advantage of friendly gestures in the past and will do so in the future."

This is a typical argument advanced by the opponents of Soviet-American agreement. But we must not look back, we must look forward! During his recent meeting with Secretary of State George Shultz, Mikhail Gorbachev stressed: "It is necessary to discard the old stereotypes. Our two countries bear a very great responsibility before the world. Today's problems cannot be resolved using an approach based on Churchill's Fulton speech and the Truman doctrine. We invite the United States to give thought to the fact that it is high time to restructure Soviet-

American relations, to reflect on what should be done now, how to improve the entire international situation. I am convinced that this can and must be done."

The common enemy

A lively discussion is going on at present in the American press about what attitude the Americans should take to the revolutionary changes taking place in the Soviet Union and to the new peace initiatives Moscow has put forward. Some say there is a sinister design fraught with danger for the West behind it. Others are ready to see it as an opening for agreement, in particular in the sphere of disarmament. It would be a good thing if there were a positive response to the call issued by Moscow for an up-to-date political assessment of the truly historic processes under way in the Soviet Union, indeed, throughout the socialist world.

Moscow has recently done much to create a new atmosphere in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., to offer new openings for mutual understanding and agreements. Since Shultz's return to the United States, some positive reactions to the latest Soviet proposals—true, hedged in with diverse reservations—have been heard from Washington. This is encouraging. Speaker of the House of Representatives James Wright, who visited Moscow at the head of a delegation of congressmen, stated that it was his impression that there now existed, perhaps for the first time since the revolution in Russia, the best opportunities for reaching a mutually acceptable agreements on arms control that would accord with U.S. interests. The Soviet side shares that view.

Mikhail Gorbachev urged the U.S. administration to give thorough consideration to all aspects of disarmament. The ball is now in the court of the American side. A realistic approach on its part, a new attitude to the concept of security—not security at the expense of the other side but mutual security—would open the road to a substantial improvement in the atmosphere of Soviet-American relations, to mutually advantageous cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., and to a joint positive contribution to the future, that future about which Secretary of State Shultz, at the end of his interview to Soviet television, proposed "fantasizing" a little.

When the wartime allied relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are analyzed in the West the emphasis is usually placed on the existence of a common enemy as the factor making for unity among the great powers. But, after all, today too a common danger threatens the Soviet and the American people, all mankind. The danger of nuclear catastrophe, in the flames of which all life on the planet would perish. Then there are the problems of the environment which know no national frontiers, the fight against hunger, problems connected with the widening gulf between the developed industrial countries and the rest of the world. And lastly, the problems of peaceful exploration of outer space. What a tremendous field for the joint positive contribution of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., not to speak of other countries!

Remembering Torgau

The Elbe linkup veterans' reunion

The other day Soviet and American war veterans met in the small conference hall of the Soviet Peace Fund. Of course, they have changed in appearance, these Americans and Russians, since the spring of 1945 when, meeting for the first time on the banks of the German river Elbe near the town of Torgau, they joyfully slapped one another on the back.

Edward Parsons, one of the members of the American delegation, speaking slowly and ponderously, says:

"We in the United States find it hard to imagine the scale of the losses suffered by the Soviet Union in the last war. I was deeply moved when at the Piskarevskoye Cemetery in Leningrad I saw the rectangular mound of the common grave where 30,000 Leningraders are buried. As many as live today in my home town! And how many more such burial mounds are there at this cemetery!"

Only six Americans were able to come to the traditional meet this year. True, this time two young people stood beside their elders during the laying of a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They were Deborah Kotsebu and Bruce Robertson. Albert Kotsebu, an activist of the American Veterans of the Elbe River Linkup, is no longer among the living. His daughter, true to her father's memory, took his place. This was her first visit to the Soviet Union.

"Father wanted so much to come to Moscow this year," she says. "But he couldn't make it. I am here so as to continue his cause, not to let the 'spirit of the Elbe' die. I see that the youth here, like young Americans, do not want a nuclear war. Many in our country are interested in the Soviet Union and in how Soviet people live. We are particularly concerned about what we of the young generation can do in order to work together. There are so many problems where joint effort is needed. Medicine, for instance. . . ."

Bruce Robertson puts out his cigarette and eagerly joins in the conversation.

"It is a great pity that so much of the efforts of talented people is spent on the manufacture and development of new types of weapons, which I hope will never be used," he says. "Their talents could serve peaceful science. We should concern ourselves with the health of people and the planet instead of carrying the arms race into outer space. It seems to me that most people think so—in America, in the U.S.S.R. and all over the world."

"If we can meet and discuss the problems occupying our minds," one of the American veterans sums up, "that means that progress in the relations between our peoples is possible. And that is important for all of us. This is the message contained in the 'spirit of the Elbe.'"

ALEXEI MAKOVSKY

U.S. war veteran William Robertson and his son Bruce with Deborah Kotsebu.
TASS photo

Coexistence, not confrontation

May 8 is an important day for the German people: it is the anniversary of their liberation from nazism. On the eve of this date HERMANN AXEN, member of the Politbureau and secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, received New Times correspondents Lev Yeliseyev and Nikita Zholkver in Berlin.

The most terrible war of all ended forty-two years ago, Hermann Axel said, thanks to the courage and heroism of the peoples of the Soviet Union and other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. May 8, 1945, became Victory Day and, at the same time, the day on which the peoples of Europe—the German people included—were delivered from nazi slavery. For mankind it meant peace, and for us a chance to turn over a new leaf.

We availed ourselves of this chance by means of two factors. First, the German working class had a tested Marxist-Leninist party, the CPG, which was later, after its unification with the SDPG, renamed the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Second, we benefited from our alliance with the U.S.S.R. which, in accordance with the principles of the anti-Hitler coalition and the Potsdam decisions, gave disinterested help and support to the anti-fascist, democratic forces of the German people.

The best sons of the German working class put up a heroic and uncompromising fight against nazism and war. One can say that they were also part of the anti-Hitler coalition. We German Communists continued to fulfil the peace mission of the revolutionary working-class movement of which Marx and Engels had spoken. A powerful impulse was given, and signal international importance imparted to this mission by the October Revolution, the 70th anniversary of which we celebrate this year. It was no fortuity that Lenin's Decree on Peace was one of the first documents of the October Revolution. It has lost none of its impact to this day, and remains the foundation on which socialist society bases its aspirations for peace.

Two world wars have begun on German soil in this century. Therefore we German Communists and anti-fascists bear, and have been vested with, special responsibility today. We must do our utmost to ensure that our country promotes only peace. This is our moral and historical duty.

But we also bear a responsibility of a different kind. Here, along the F.R.G. border, passes the line of demarcation between socialism and imperialism, the watershed between the two biggest military groupings of our time. The line of social confrontation of the two social systems passes here. And we are obliged to do everything we can lest this confrontation should erupt into armed conflict. Peaceful coexistence must be the long-term basis of security and cooperation in Europe.

Over the years since the formation of the SUPG and since the establish-

ment of the G.D.R. we have proved that we are an anti-fascist and peace-loving state. Over the 37 years of its advance, the G.D.R., allied with the U.S.S.R. and other Warsaw Treaty and CMEA member states, has become a bastion of peace and socialism in the heart of Europe, which obliges us to strengthen socialism in our country and conduct a consistent peace policy. The 11th SUPG Congress confirmed this. While addressing the congress, Mikhail Gorbachev underscored the role of the G.D.R. on the European continent.

In his report on behalf of the Central Committee, Erich Honecker defined the basic principles of the G.D.R.'s foreign policy.

These principles are: the struggle for a lasting world peace; the strengthening of the unity, brotherhood and might of the socialist world community, and the socialist system as a whole; fraternal support for all peoples fighting for national and social liberation, against the vestiges of colonialism and neocolonialism, for a new and just international economic order; and a persistent effort to implement the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence in the nuclear age. Now it is indeed a question of either surviving together, or perishing together, as Mikhail Gorbachev put it. This is why a new approach to the problems of peace and international cooperation, and to international security, is so vitally important today.

The Helsinki Final Act formulates the code of peaceful coexistence and the principles underlying security and cooperation in Europe. This is a great achievement. Nevertheless, no progress has been made towards military détente, the need for which was pointed out in the Final Act. Reactionary imperialist forces took advantage of there being no progress in the sphere of disarmament; they toughened confrontation and spurred on the arms race. Today they are exposing the world to a still greater threat: the militarization of outer space, which would destabilize the international situation in the extreme.

The 11th SUPG Congress pointed—as the 27th CPSU Congress had done before it—to the organic connection between a radical cutback in the most dangerous, nuclear, weapons and the establishment of a system of international security and cooperation. Socialist countries have submitted relevant proposals to the United Nations.

Such initiatives are of special importance to Europe—the cradle of the working-class movement, a centre of modern civilization and at the same time the continent where both world wars had their origins. Most of the world's weapons of mass destruction are concentrated in Europe.

After the aggressive imperialist circles had adopted in Brussels the decision to deploy Pershing 2 and cruise missiles in Western Europe in order to destabilize the military balance in their favour, the G.D.R., along with the U.S.S.R. and other Warsaw Treaty countries, took the necessary military countermeasures. At the same time they announced their desire for an end to the arms race and for disarmament. Erich Honecker made a statement to that effect at the November 1983 plenary meeting of the SUPG Central Committee, i.e., immediately after the F.R.G. had decided to go

ahead with the deployment of new missiles on its territory.

Our Party and state leaders, Comrade Honecker above all, made an active bid for continued East-West dialogue, particularly with the NATO member states. Special mention should be made of the meetings with Pierre Trudeau, Andreas Papandreou, Laurent Fabius, talks with Mauno Koivisto, ex-Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, Franz Vranitzky, Austria's present head of state, Olof Palme and Willy Brandt. Steps were taken to establish contacts with representatives of Spain, Portugal and the F.R.G.

We have been conducting a consistent policy of peaceful coexistence with the F.R.G. On March 12, 1985, Erich Honecker and Helmut Kohl came out with a joint statement which defined the principles of border inviolability and the territorial integrity of all European states—the principles that constitute the groundwork of peace on the continent.

We are doing all we can to help make the policy of peaceful coexistence a success, and increase both German states' practical contribution towards disarmament and détente. That is why we resolutely objected at our Party congress to the F.R.G. joining the SDI programme, and its participation in the arms race. At the same time we made peace proposals that provided for an arms cut. For the same reason, Erich Honecker handed over to Chancellor Kohl—on the very day that Mikhail Gorbachev suggested eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe—a proposal to support the Soviet initiative and start official consultations between the G.D.R. and F.R.G. governments without delay. The F.R.G. government gave a positive response to our proposal. The first round of consultations has already taken place. The G.D.R. and the F.R.G. urged an early conclusion of an agreement on the elimination of medium-range missiles without any reservations.

At the same time we support all the other initiatives of the U.S.S.R. We have suggested to the F.R.G. government that conventional weapons be drastically reduced, all arms cut proposals bilaterally supported, nuclear tests ended, the militarization of space refrained from, and the ABM treaty strictly observed.

The fact that the F.R.G. government has come out in support of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic missiles, observing the ABM treaty, ending nuclear tests and a universal ban on chemical weapons deserves serious attention.

While acting in accord with other Warsaw Treaty states, the G.D.R. has put forward its own initiatives for ending the arms race and for disarmament. The SUPG has worked out, jointly with the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the principles of the establishment of a chemical weapon-free zone and a non-nuclear corridor in Central Europe.

Both proposals have had broad repercussions in Europe and across the world. Now the governments of the G.D.R. and Czechoslovakia have officially suggested early negotiations with the F.R.G. on the establishment of the non-nuclear corridor. Our objective is to deliver Europe from nuclear weapons. This is a noble and perfectly realistic proposition. Representatives of the three states are already holding consultations in the context of the Geneva disarmament conference on setting up a chemical weapon-free zone in Central Europe.

Like all other nations, we are now concentrating on the early signing of an agreement on the elimination of medium-range missiles in Europe. We think all countries, big and small, want the U.S.S.R.-U.S. talks in Geneva to be crowned with constructive and substantive results.

Mikhail Gorbachev's radical proposals, aimed at delivering the world from nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction and deservedly referred to as the peace charter of the 20th century, as well as the new Soviet initiative with regard to medium-range missiles, have thrown the opponents of disarmament and the military-industrial complex into disarray. Those are the very forces that were alarmed by the outcome of Reykjavik and did their utmost to torpedo the results of the summit in the Icelandic capital. They have failed to do so. Mikhail Gorbachev untied the Reykjavik package and said the U.S.S.R. was prepared to negotiate medium-range missiles separately. This very approach had been insisted on by the reactionaries on the obvious assumption that nothing positive would happen. And now the same quarters are trying to put together a new package and demanding linkages with all kinds of weapon. Their object is to prevent progress in curbing the arms race and in arms reduction.

We are against any preconditions. We demand that the medium-range missile provisions Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan agreed upon in Reykjavik be made the basis of an agreement.

That the new approach to the issues of war and peace is not only necessary but is actually taking shape can be seen from the joint disarmament proposals put forward by the SUPG and the SDPG. Those were difficult negotiations, but in the last analysis, they were constructive and successful. We welcome the fact that the SDPG, like the overwhelming majority of the Social Democratic and Socialist parties comprising the Socialist International, supports an end to the arms race, and disarmament.

The emergence of a peace-loving and stable socialist state of workers and peasants on German soil was one of the highlights of the second half of the 20th century. The existence and strengthening of this state serve the cause of universal security. We are convinced that despite all the difficulties and regardless of the dangers the schemes of aggressive circles are fraught with, we shall succeed in foiling plans for unleashing a new war.

One of the most popular slogans in the G.D.R. today is "My workplace is my arena in the struggle for peace." It is under this slogan that we celebrate the 42nd anniversary of our liberation from nazism and shall mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. This slogan reflects the unbreakable union between peace and socialism, and the fact that socialism's policy of peace has become a real force to be reckoned with. ■

Trade unionists meet

The threat of nuclear destruction looming over the planet calls for ever greater social involvement on the part of the working people. This was the keynote of the international scientific and practical conference, "70 Years of the Great October Revolution and Trade Union Movement of Today," in Moscow.

Speakers at the international forum, which drew envoys from the mass trade union organizations of over 120 countries, stressed that the ideas proclaimed by the October Revolution are closely bound up with the topical questions of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. The concomitants of militarism—unemployment, inflation, heavy taxation—are common knowledge. Hence, the conference participants concluded, socio-economic demands cannot be met without curbing the arms race and safeguarding peace.

If this effort is to be stepped up, it is necessary to remedy a situation where the three major trade union centres—the WFTU, the ICFTU and the WCL—practically fail to cooperate with one another while working towards the same goals.

VIENNA MEETING

An omen of success?

● A THIRD STAGE OF THE VIENNA REVIEW MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE OPENED ON MAY 5.

The Vienna meeting as such started last November. Much has already been done. It is enough to note that over 130 motions have been tabled, a record number for meetings of this kind. A good half of them, incidentally, were put forward by the socialist countries.

The Soviet Union and its allies are doing their utmost to secure a healthier political climate in Europe. How can this be brought about? First, by getting tangible results to the effort to consolidate security and achieve disarmament, to which end major initiatives have been made. Indeed, the socialist countries have introduced a dozen proposals that bear directly on the problem.

How are NATO's representatives responding? In the many months of deliberations they have not tabled a single proposal on the military aspects of security. They have still not reacted to the Polish proposal to have the forthcoming stage of the Stockholm conference consider confidence-building measures along with practical disarmament issues, even though the proposal has been backed by the other Warsaw Treaty countries and given a favourable reception by a number of neutral and non-aligned states.

It is known that during the Vienna meeting, representatives of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO states have initiated off-the-record consultations on conventional armaments and armed forces. Should these consultations make for productive talks on disarmament in Europe—from the Atlantic to the Urals—it will be all to the good. However, the fact that the U.S. and its closest allies are prone to ignore the neutral and non-aligned countries whenever the military aspects of European security are considered is cause for concern.

Ambassador Markku Reimaa, the chief Finnish delegate, told your correspondent: "Such behaviour cannot but give rise to concern. Indeed, every nation in Europe, including the smaller and medium-sized ones, has a vital stake in the reduction or complete elimination of arsenals on the continent. That can only be achieved by pooling efforts. No country, no bloc has the right to monopolize the discussion of security issues, as they concern us all."

The second stage of the Vienna meeting has shown that most participants are keenly interested in promoting commercial and economic cooperation in Europe. This is illustrated not only by the over 40 relevant proposals, but also by the constructive dialogue in connection with the "second basket." True, it cannot be said that the West has completely abandoned discriminatory measures against the socialist states. For instance, Common Market members, U.S., Canadian, and Norwegian delegations tabled a motion that, if adopted, would effectively put paid to the possibility of deals on a compensation basis.

Still, work on the "second basket" is giving reason for optimism. Delegations from both East and West admit that, given good will and the preparedness to seek mutually acceptable solutions, the meeting in its entirety could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the date set.

The issues of human rights and humanitarian cooperation loomed large during the second phase of the Vienna meeting. It would be no exaggeration to say that the wind of change from Moscow set the pace for discussions on these subjects. Small wonder that the two Russian terms "perestroika" and "glasnost" are now so popular with the representatives of the 35 states. However, shopworn Western stereotypes persist, forcing NATO delegates to stick to a course that has long been seen to be unproductive. Indeed, though the Vienna meeting has now been in progress for over six months, the West has still not produced any official reply to the Soviet proposal to hold a conference in Moscow to discuss the entire range of issues concerned with humanitarian cooperation.

"The delegations of the U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries," Yuri Kashlev, chief Soviet delegate, told your correspondent, "are worried by the way in which the discussion of the proposals that have already been tabled is being artificially delayed and by attempts to force one's own concepts and dismiss the views of the other side offhand. That can only complicate matters if not deadlock the entire debate."

Special importance attaches to the current phase of the Vienna meeting which is speedily to draft and adopt a substantive document compatible with the spirit of the time. In their recent statement, the Warsaw Treaty Foreign Ministers Committee urged all the countries involved to spare no effort so that the meeting culminate in the adoption of significant and well-balanced decisions.

After the recess, the participants in the Vienna meeting moved from the old Hofburg Palace in the centre of Vienna to the newly-built Austria international centre of congresses on the left bank of the Danube. Hopefully, the change of address will give an added impetus to the effort to bring work for the future of our common European home to a satisfactory outcome.

ANATOLY KOVRIGIN
our special correspondent
Vienna—Moscow

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The root of evil

● IN SOUTH AFRICA THE POLITICAL WEATHER GLASS CONTINUES TO INDICATE STORM AND STRESS. FOR THIS PRETORIA'S CONTINUED AGGRESSIVE COURSE IS RESPONSIBLE.

Further proof of this was provided by the assault on Livingstone in Zambia carried out by South African commandos late last month. Announcing the results of this brigand sortie, South Africa's racist authorities boasted that five members of the African National Congress (ANC) had been killed. The victims, however, were ordinary Zambian citizens.

The racist sortie demonstrates the connection between the regime's foreign and home policies. It occurred roughly a fortnight before elections to the "whites" chamber of the country's parliament, which promised to be the most difficult ever for the Nationalist Party. To improve the state of its affairs, Pretoria resorted to the time-tested method of spreading rumours, this time to the effect that ANC fighting squads were supposedly massing in neighbouring countries, mainly Zambia, with the intention of overrunning the country on the election day to disrupt voting. South African President Pieter Botha threatened the neighbouring countries with "repressive action." This was clearly the underlying purpose of the raid on Zambia, the only rea-

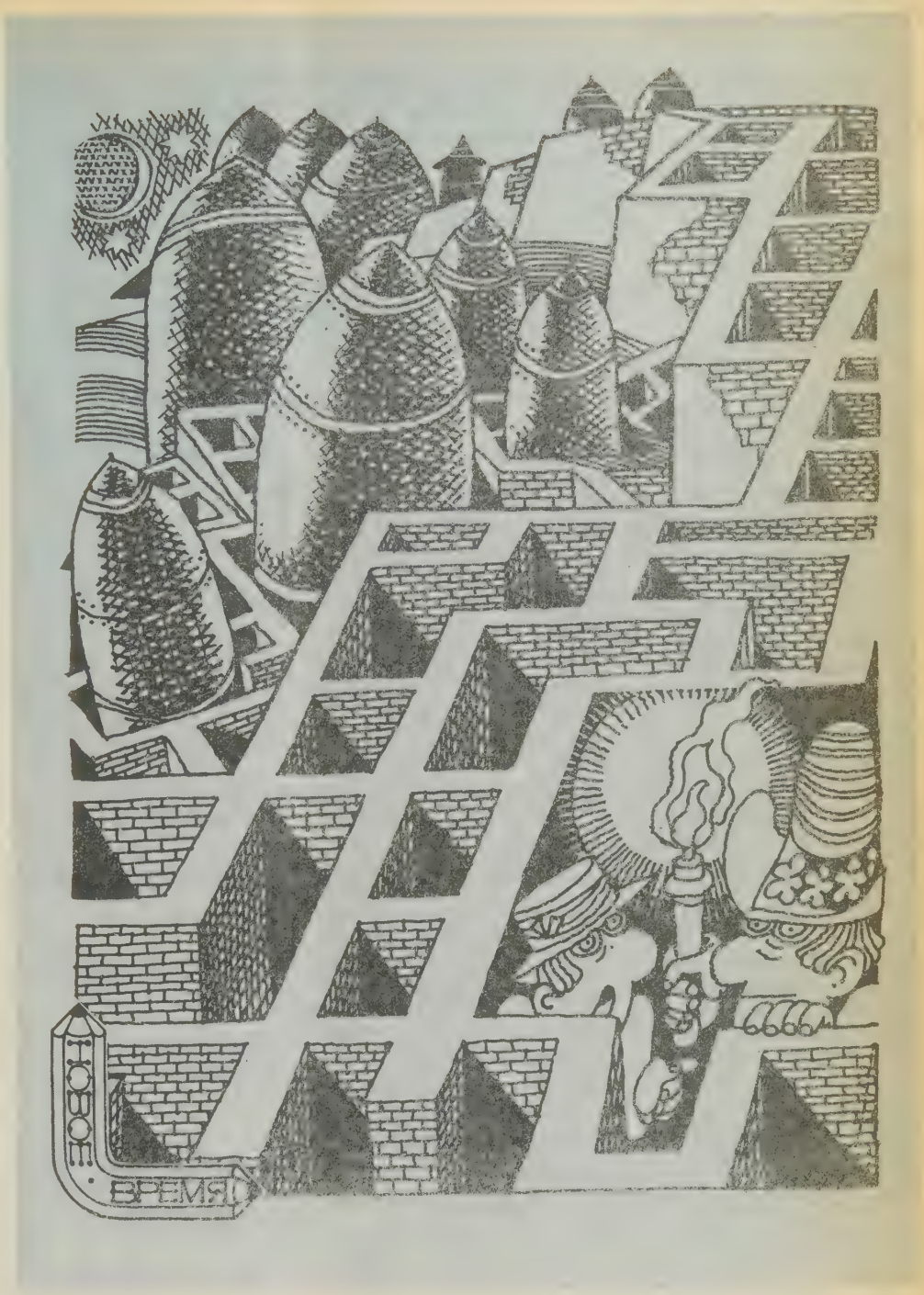
son for which was the South African President's urge to show a vote-getting "toughness."

This was not the first time South Africa attacked a neighbour. Last year its paramilitary groups launched simultaneous terrorist raids against Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. It has also mounted attacks on Angola and Mozambique.

South Africa pursues its aggressive policy against the frontline states in close coordination with the U.S. For a time Washington preferred to keep its intervention in the affairs of, for instance, Angola under cover. However, since 1986 it has openly supplied UNITA anti-government groups with Stinger missiles and other modern weapons. Then, late last month Zaire and the U.S. initiated joint exercises in Shaba Province on the border with Angola. In the process American military personnel will "develop" the Zaire military base at Kamina in order, the Washington Post reports, to make it "suitable for contingencies ... throughout southern Africa."

Understandably, the very existence of South Africa's racist regime is the root of the evil in the subcontinent. While it exists neither peace nor tranquility are conceivable. It is small wonder that so much blood is being spilled not only in South Africa itself, but in Namibia and the frontline states as well. The struggle against the racist regime is becoming the concern of all of Africa and for that matter the entire world community. However, this struggle is made more difficult, since the U.S., Britain, the F.R.G., France and Japan support Pretoria, a fact stated at his news conference in Moscow by Tanzanian Foreign Minister Ben Mkapa, who came to Moscow on April 29 with a group of high-ranking representatives of the frontline states for an exchange of views. He stressed that the Western states had declined to back economic sanctions against South Africa. The Soviet Union, however, as was reaffirmed when Mikhail Gorbachev met representatives of the frontline states, regards the struggle of the peoples of Africa as fair and just, and will continue to give them every support.

YURI BOCHKARYOV



— The Russians offer an easy way out of the nuclear maze.
— That would be too easy...

Cartoon by Vsevolod Arsenyev

GROUP OF 77

The voice of the Third World

● A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IS VITAL. SUCH IS THE BASIC CONCLUSION DRAWN BY THE GROUP OF 77 AT THEIR SIXTH CONFERENCE IN HAVANA LATE LAST MONTH.

Established in 1963, the group today incorporates 127 states, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At their latest conference at ministerial level in Havana, they coordinated their economic demands and approaches in anticipation of the session of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to be held this coming summer.

Although the whole of the Third World has common economic problems and burdens, the earlier regional meetings in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), San Jose (Costa Rica) and Dacca (Bangladesh) each stressed what they thought of as being of special local importance.

Thus, the Dacca meeting singled out the need to invigorate South-South economic cooperation (between the developing countries themselves) and the principle of their collective economic independence. On the other hand, the San Jose meeting attached priority to the stupendous external debts of Latin American states. No wonder their view was again voiced in Havana by the delegate from Brazil, which in February announced a moratorium on the payment of interest on the bulk of its $100 billion debt, and is currently repulsing outright threats from its imperialist creditors. Finally, the Addis Ababa meeting sought primarily to get the industrialized states to allocate resources for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-90, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly last year.

The Havana conference debated all basic aspects of the mounting external debts of the Third World countries and trading options on the world market. Fidel Castro provided illustrations graphically demonstrating the extremely adverse price ratio of imports and exports. Whereas in 1959 the export of 24 tons of sugar was enough to purchase a 60-hp tractor, in 1982, 115 tons had to be exported, and this year, as much as 133 tons. Again, in 1959 receipts from the sale of six tons of jute fibre were sufficient to purchase a 7- or 8-ton lorry, whereas in 1982, 26 tons of jute had to be sold, and this year, 54 tons.

However, even given these disadvantageous prices, the developing countries are finding it increasingly hard to export raw materials due to the growing number of obstacles the leading Western powers are placing in their way.

The external debt of the developing countries already exceeds a trillion dollars. The annual interest alone amounts to about $118 billion. However, faced with diminishing export receipts and rising import prices, payment is completely out of question. The Group of 77 has unanimously concluded that under existing conditions it will be simply impossible to repay the external debt.

Can the developing countries cope with their economic problems in general? Or are they, as Mexican economist José Estevez puts it, "countries that will never develop"? The Havana conference clearly defined a totally different, well-founded view, with which we entirely concur. The Third World countries support the Soviet proposals for real major disarmament moves, especially in nuclear disarmament, so that part of the money thus saved can be diverted to meet the requirements of their social and economic advancement. One further indispensable condition is the restructuring of the world economic relations along democratic lines.

In its declaration the Havana conference summed up and coordinated the economic demands of the Third World. The developing countries will be able to get the West to recognize these demands only if they forge effective unity. The next step will come at UNCTAD's seventh session in Geneva in July.

TATYANA SHAVROVA

MICRONESIA

Annexation on the sly

● ON MAY 11 THE U.N. TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL WILL BEGIN TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN THE U.N. TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS MICRONESIA.

In 1947 administration of these islands was entrusted to the U.S. in order "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement" of their inhabitants. However, from the outset the administering power strove to transform the trust territory into a military-strategic bridgehead, bind it politically and financially to Washington and, subsequently, in effect, annex the archipelago.

The neocolonialist trustees virtually destroyed the traditional industries, notably, coconut growing and fishing, as a result of which a third of islanders lost their jobs. Since 1946 the U.S. has conducted 66 A- and H-bomb tests on the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls of the Marshall Islands, thus ousting the aboriginal population for all time. In 1964 the Pentagon turned the Kwajalein atoll into a proving ground for testing missiles, while currently it has been made a base for Reagan's "star wars."

In short, Washington has transformed Micronesia, as former U.S. Senator Gary Hart put it, into "a military colony of the United States." The Hongkong Far Eastern Economic Review terms it a "Pentagon paradise."

The U.S. intends to hold on to this "paradise" by unlawfully dismembering the trust territory and absorbing it piecemeal. First, in 1975, a "covenant to establish a commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States" was foisted upon the Northern Mariana Islands. Then what was left of Micronesia was split up into three administrative entities—the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (F.S.M.) occupying the East Carolines, and the Republic of Palau occupying the West Carolines. Agreements with them on "free association" with the U.S. were signed in the early 1980s. This "freedom" implies first of all unlimited U.S. control with regard to "defence or security matters." Washington is to enjoy "all powers" as regards setting up military installations and conducting armed forces manoeuvres, as well as free access to ports and airspace for U.S. warships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons.

Though plebiscites and re-

ferendums have been held to "legitimize" these documents, free expression of will is totally out of question, considering the complete dominion by the administering power, which did not stop short of both intimidation and bribery. Nonetheless, even given such circumstances, not everything is rosy for the administering authorities. Despite four successive referendums, the last in December 1986, the administering authority of the Palau Islands has failed to gain the necessary 75 per cent vote for "free association." The inhabitants reject the agreement, which conflicts with their constitution's anti-nuclear provisions. The Pentagon had planned to occupy large estates on various Micronesian islands for its "strategic complex."

The Pacific peoples are unambiguously showing that they want nuclear weapons out. The Rarotonga Treaty proclaiming the South Pacific a denuclearized zone is already in force. However, Washington has manifestly declined to recognize the said nuclear-free status; on the contrary, it seeks to deploy nuclear weapons in Micronesia.

In November 1986 Ronald Reagan announced in a presidential statement that trusteeship of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands and the F.S.M. would cease. This, however, was a unilateral move made in circumvention of the U.N. Security Council, and undertaken, in effect, to absorb these territories completely. U.S. arbitrary and unilateral actions with regard to Micronesia conflict with the Charter and other documents of the U.N. They cannot absolve the U.N. of responsibility for the trust territory and for the lot of the Micronesians until they gain true freedom and independence.

ALEXANDER USVATOV

JAPAN—U.S.A.

Sanctions a weapon

● WHEN JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER YASUHIRO NAKASONE ACCEPTED RONALD REAGAN'S INVITATION TO PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S., HE CAN HARDLY HAVE BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD LARGELY DETERMINE HIS OWN FUTURE.

Confident that he would be able to achieve virtually anything he wanted, Nakasone evidently thought his meeting with old friend would consolidate his prestige as a political figure and thus give him an edge over his rivals before the question of a new leader for the Liberal Democratic Party is decided this coming October. But it was not to be.

The commercial and economic friction between the U.S. and Japan is unprecedentedly evident today. For the first time the White House has employed economic sanctions, imposing 100 per cent tariffs on a range of Japanese imports. Literally hours before the visit, the U.S. House of Representatives passed what is possibly the most stringent protectionist motion, notably, the Gephardt amendment, according to which any country with an "inordinate" surplus in trade with the U.S. —Japan heads the list—must reduce it by an annual 10 per cent over the next four years.

Nakasone's position is complicated by his cabinet's having clashed with tough opposition at home. In last month's local elections the ruling party sustained heavy losses.

Just before Nakasone's U.S. visit, emissaries from the U.S. administration visited Tokyo one after another, demanding concessions from Japan. The Japanese news media held U.S. pressure responsible for the police raid on the Toshiba Kikai engineering firm, which some four years ago sold several computerized machine tools to the Soviet Union, supposedly in contravention of COCOM regulations. The firm now faces a lengthy period without export licences. The Tokyo Shimbun commented that this represented a major U.S. operation to hamstring Soviet-Japanese trade in order to deprive Tokyo of an important market for its exports. Japan has now been urged to stop importing Soviet coal and purchase the more expensive U.S. coal.

Though Nakasone failed to secure a promise that Reagan would lift the sanctions at once, Japan's conservatives see the results of the visit as hopeful. They particularly note American preparedness to reduce its immense budget deficit and boost the competitiveness of U.S. goods. Japanese economists regard these two factors as underlying the bilateral trade imbalance. There is satisfaction with Reagan's declared preparedness categorically to oppose protectionism; more specifically, he promised Nakasone that he would veto the trade bill.

Nevertheless, the opposition maintains that Japan's commitment to boost demand at home, liberalize the market and effect economic reform will place a heavy burden on the working classes. It has rebuked Nakasone for having failed to persuade Reagan to agree to lower military spending in order to reduce the U.S. budget deficit.

Though economic friction dominated the talks, problems that transcend the interests of U.S. and Japanese industrialists were also discussed. These are nuclear weapons and Japan's involvement in SDI. According to the news media, in Washington Nakasone favoured the earliest signing of a bilateral agreement defining the terms of Japan's involvement in SDI research. It is expected that this agreement will be signed before the Seven meet in Venice.

VLADIMIR OVSYANNIKOV
our own correspondent

Tokyo

MOMENT OF TRUTH

Professor TAIR TAIROV

The desire to avert a nuclear catastrophe has become an incontrovertible fact of world politics. New sections of society, people of all generations are constantly joining the movement for peace and survival. We are witnessing the emergence of a worldwide anti-nuclear consciousness based on common human values.

One hears with increasing frequency that if the best minds have joined the struggle to eliminate the danger of nuclear war then there is no need to worry, as they will come to an agreement and find the road to peace. But diametrically opposite views are also being expressed: demonstrations and actions by rank-and-file people do not produce the desired results and the ultimate decision depends on scientists and politicians. One can also hear such views from those for whom the struggle for peace amounts mostly to meetings at symposiums held in comfortable hotels. Public protests, they say, have not made NATO alter its decision to deploy U.S. missiles in Europe. That is so. Yet I totally disagree with such a sceptical attitude to the role of popular movements. Not a single great individual has ever succeeded in effecting a revolution in social consciousness without the extensive participation of the people at large. Great ideas appeared on the crest of public movements, guided them onward and relied on them.

The idea of eliminating nuclear and all other types of weapon of mass destruction is one of the great ideas our age has produced. It has not yet captured the minds of the majority of mankind. But the fact that today statesmen are on the threshold of a concrete albeit partial implementation of this idea in practice is in the long run another result of the historic creativity of the masses.

Protest against the danger of atomic and thermonuclear war has not abated since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Let us recall the movement for the banning of A- and H-bombs in the 1950s and 1960s, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, the Pugwash movement of scientists, the peace demonstrations during the U.S. war in Vietnam, and the appeals of the World Peace Council, trade unions, and youth and women's organizations and movements of the 1970s.

The nuclear arsenals that had been accumulated by the mid-1970s were fraught with no less a danger than that which we confront today. But then the danger did not find an adequate reflection in social consciousness, even less so in the political thinking. Signs of change appeared after NATO's decision in December 1979 to deploy new medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. This sparked off protests by the public and disarmament experts. Yet in discussions at the time the danger of the extinction of civilization as such and the "nuclear winter" was not stressed. The decisive change has occurred only recently. Why?

The millions of Europeans who took part in the mass campaigns against the deployment of new American missiles in Europe and in support of turning the continent into a non-nuclear zone, described the autumn of 1981 as historic. In the course of a disarmament week at the time, an unprecedented number of people went out into the streets of European capitals, and there were huge demonstrations, some of them involving more than half a million people. These events were preceded by the 45-day peace march from Copenhagen to Paris. The Norwegians, Swedes, Danes and Finns were joined by Belgians, Britons, Italians, Germans, Greeks and Americans. The marchers' slogan was "No to nuclear arms in Europe!" On Dutch territory the march was accompanied by the ringing of church bells. On August 6, 1981, the marchers were joined in Paris by Olof Palme. And it was that march that provided the spark that started the bonfire of anti-nuclear protests.

After the historic autumn of 1981 the idea of a nuclear-free Europe began to take hold among Europeans. The Soviet Union immediately supported this demand, which originated in the anti-war movement, as a real step on the way to a nuclear-free world.

Many elements of new thinking stem from the peace movement

It was then that President Reagan's "zero option" appeared. It was by no means a gesture of good will, as American propaganda tried to present it. It was a forced reaction to the demand of broad sections of the public in Western countries supported by various influential political parties, among them Social Democratic leaders in the F.R.G. and Britain.

The President's action was designed to placate the anti-war public. Washington never intended to follow up its words with actions.

In those days the demand "No to Pershings and Cruises" merged in the ranks of the demonstrators with the slogans "No to SS-20s." "No to nuclear weapons in Europe either East or West!" This call had originated in the ranks of Soviet peace champions, when 800,000 of them marched through the streets of Moscow in October 1982. Mass public opinion polls in 1983 unequivocally demonstrated that Europeans did not want missiles. But the missiles were deployed. And this generated disenchantment among many participants in the anti-missile struggle. But at the time the inertia of the traditional "tooth for a tooth" or "missile for a missile" psychology was still strong among politicians. Historic changes were needed—the April plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, the 27th CPSU Congress and Reykjavik—to work out the really unconventional solutions which the new Soviet leadership now proposes to the world.

Many elements of the new thinking originated in the ranks of the peace movement. The Washington Centre for Defence Information, joined by the Soviet Peace Committee and women's and religious organizations in many countries, called on the Soviet and U.S. leaders to stop all nuclear tests. There were numerous requests to the U.S.S.R. to do this unilaterally, to set an example, to breach the wall.

The mass movement to avert nuclear war has produced a

whole generation of leaders and organizers of national anti-nuclear and anti-missile campaigns, with a following of hundreds of thousands of people. Today it can be said that the Soviet leadership has met all of their requests and gone beyond them.

The solution of the missile problem is a hurdle which mankind must clear. Like slavery, nuclear arms have fettered man's spiritual and psychological development. Will we succeed in breaking these nuclear chains? The drafting of the treaty on the elimination of medium-range missiles is the first test of maturity. The question is whether statesmen will be able to pass it.

People already want something more than the simple averting of the danger of nuclear war. The elimination of weapons will not automatically result in a long and stable peace. What is needed is a fundamental change in the very system of international relations, in present-day political structures. We must discard the "enemy image," develop partnership, open wide the doors for all types of cooperation between peoples, especially in the humanitarian field. The time has come for extensive exchanges and contacts between ordinary people and not just between statesmen.

That is why "détente from below" or people-to-people diplomacy has now become a popular slogan with a considerable section of the peace movement. True, there are some forces that are trying to use the slogan in the interests of their long-cherished desire to revise the political system in the socialist countries and provoke confrontation and collisions between different peace organizations.

The anti-nuclear movement has spread to almost all sections of the population both in the West and the East. But to get real results in the matter of universal nuclear disarmament co-operation is needed. Have ideological differences impeded such cooperation? Yes, they have. Hundreds of the most diverse anti-war organizations have sprung up, along with mechanism to coordinate them internationally. The peace movement, it would seem, is best suited to political and ideological pluralism.

I must admit that among us there were those who treated some activists in the West European peace movement with mistrust and suspected them of wanting to split existing associations of peace campaigners. At times discussions were heated and even acrimonious. Often our colleagues in the West displayed ideological intolerance and there were even instances when they refused to cooperate.

But it is gratifying that these years have been a period of mutual schooling in the art of coexistence and accepting each other as we are, the art of debate and not abuse, the art of overcoming differences to serve our common aims.

To the "culture" of the nuclear bomb, the anti-war movement has opposed its culture of peace, a new mentality based on a common stake in creating a reliable system of international security.

New forces continue to join the peace movement. More and more people are beginning to think about peace and the future. The Soviet Union's bold and farsighted proposals to eliminate all types of nuclear weapon in Europe accord with the genuine interests of West and East, the United States and the Soviet Union, North and South. Successful Soviet-American talks on medium-range missiles, and the conclusion of an appropriate treaty would be the first significant step on the road to a nuclear-free world, a triumph for the statesmen and ordinary people who are creating the culture of peace. ■

IN RETROSPECT

Red Easter

Kilmainham Jail is well known in Dublin. Located in an old working-class neighbourhood not far from the celebrated Guinness brewery, it is a long time since it has been used as a prison. Recently, however, it was opened as a museum where tourists can step into the damp dungeons and climb the echoing metal stairs to the row of solitary cells where the sun never penetrates. The British certainly knew how to build prisons.

Each Easter people congregate by the iron railings before the entrance to the prison yard to pay tribute to the memory of the men who fell in the struggle for Ireland's independence. They place flowers at the foot of the small obelisk where in April 1916 sixteen leaders of the rising against British rule were shot.

The first world war, which exacerbated Ireland's conflict with British imperialism, greatly stimulated the Irish love of freedom. The 1916 Dublin rising, the famous Red Easter, presaged the 1919-21 struggle for national liberation.

At the head of the rising, for which Irish revolutionary democrats had laid the groundwork in collaboration with the city's working-class vanguard, were the poet and patriot Padraic Pearse and the Irish proletarian leader James Connolly.

April 1916. British colonialists shelling a seat of the rising in Dublin.

The Irish Volunteers, who had refused to support the British government in the war, and Connolly's Citizen Army were to form the sinew of the rising that began on April 24, 1916.

The detachments led by Pearse and Connolly captured the General Post Office and occupied a number of factories. On the same day they signed and published the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, and for the first time the Irish tricolour was raised over Dublin.

John Swift, honorary president of the Ireland-U.S.S.R. Society, has vivid recollections of the events. The British cruelly suppressed the insurrection after several days of shelling.

To quash the rising, London invested General John Maxwell with unlimited authority. Many of the insurgents were killed in the fighting, others were imprisoned along with hundreds if not thousands, who were not involved in the rising at all. The sixteen leaders were moved to Kilmainham Jail and shot. Badly wounded James Connolly was carried into the prison yard on a stretcher, placed on a chair and shot sitting down.

Lenin had high praise for the courage shown by Ireland's patriots during the 1916 rising. He particularly emphasized its significance as a focus of anti-imperialist war in Europe.

IGOR PONOMARYOV

Dublin

Olives and bullets

The Soviet Union and Afghanistan are linked by ties of multiform cooperation. In the present-day complex and troubled situation Afghanistan's northern neighbour is helping it build a new life.

In all the provinces of Afghanistan (and there are 31 of them) the harvest is brought in by October-November. There is only one exception—the province of Nangarhar in the east. Harvesting there continues almost until the end of January. The explanation for this difference lies in the climatic conditions. The province is sheltered by the spurs of the Sulaiman Mountains, and the warm air from the Indian Ocean moves up constantly towards it. That is why there is neither snow nor frost in the Nangarhar valley. In the north temperatures can drop to —15° C, but in the Nangarhar valley roses and orchids will be in full bloom, and oranges, lemons, tangerines, grapefruit and olives will be ripening. Nangarhar is the only province in Afghanistan with a subtropical climate. "It is always spring or summer there," say residents of Jalalabad, the provincial capital.

The year's results

"We are pleased with the year's results," said Ehlas Abdul Latif, director of the Jalalabad irrigation complex. "It wasn't easy to bring the crops in without losses. For that peace is needed. All the Afghan people need peace. Lately, following the revolutionary government's proclaimed policy of national reconciliation, many of those who joined the anti-government military units have started to lay down their arms. They are returning to their villages. And that, incidentally, made it much easier to bring in the crops. Previously we managed to harvest at most only half. Now that spring has come peace is needed for field work, too, and the Afghan peasant would rather wield a plough than a rifle."

Ehlas Abdul Latif is an engineer. In 1975 he graduated from the Polytechnical Institute in Leningrad, specializing in hydroengineering. For a time he worked at Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reform, but in recent years he has headed the Jalalabad irrigation complex, the biggest Soviet-Afghan agricultural project.

The director proudly showed us the settlements of Samarhel, Balu, Bahsud, Baticot, Baricau and Lachapur—all of which had sprung up in the 1970s around the complex. Under the shade of eucalyptuses and tamarisks along the roadside stood rows of lorries—Soviet-made Kamazes, Mazes, Czech Tatras, and Mercedeses. They were being loaded with the fruits of the new harvest. Then they would form a convoy and under the protection of helicopters—against possible attacks by the dushmans—would carry the fruit, olives and olive oil to the population of the northern provinces. Part of their cargo intended for export would pass through the port of Khyraton on the Amu Darya for shipment to the Soviet Union and other countries. Citrus fruit and olives have in the past few years become major export items.

I had visited the province in December 1962, when work on the irrigation complex was only beginning. Then all around was desert—as barren as we imagine the moon. People here used to say: "Even a bird can't fly over our province—it drops dead from the heat. That's why it is known as the Valley of Death."

The irrigation complex has changed things completely over these 25 years. Now the province has a population of 800,000 and is rightly described as the country's citrus orchard.

"With the help of the Soviet Union," E. A. Latif said, "we have built an 11,000-kilowatt hydropower station on the Kabul River, which flows through our province, a 70-kilometre irrigating main, power transmission and telephone lines, a repair works, ferroconcrete structures factory, several settlements and the Hadda and Ghaziabad farms. A modern cannery has just been commissioned. All this has helped reclaim land that was regarded as worthless. It has helped boost the people's living standard, and, specifically, it has relieved some nomad tribes of the need to travel to Pakistan.

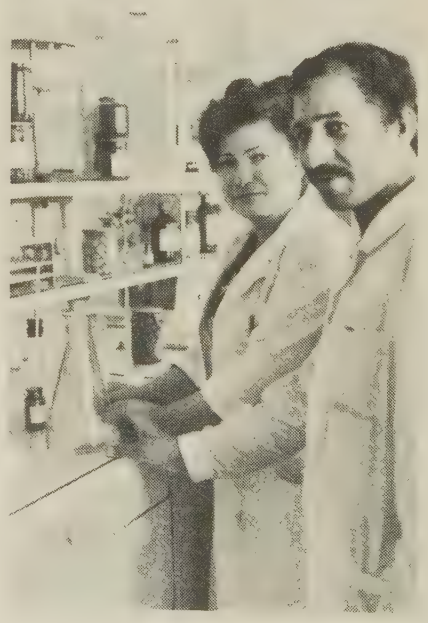
"In addition," continued E. A. Latif, "the complex has become the centre for training cadres for the public agricultural sector and teaching new advanced methods. We have already trained 8,000 skilled workers."

On the arch over the entrance to the Ghaziabad farm are these words of the Oriental poet Haffez: "Plant the trees of friendship that bear the fruits of happiness." The farm was built in 1969. Neat cottages line the main street immersed in greenery and in the central square there is a secondary school.

In the board building I was told that 1,500 people work on the farm. Most of them are trade union members. Twenty are members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

A Soviet expert and her Afghan colleague in the laboratory of the Jalalabad cannery.

Photo by author



A merchant's view

The Jalalabad complex, now entering its third decade, employs more than 5,000 people, on the whole. In the past two decades the complex harvested 53,000 tons of citrus fruit, 14,000 tons of olives, and 26,500 tons of wheat, and the cannery produced 160 tons of olive oil. The task today is to increase crop yields and raise the complex's economic efficiency.

Seventy Soviet specialists, mostly from the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics, also work there. This group has been headed since May 1985 by Mukhtar Ganiyev, who in the past took part in the reclamation of the Hungry Steppe. The chief agronomist at the complex from 1965 to 1969 was Alexei Desyatnichenko, an expert on citrus fruit. At present he is there as a consultant. It was on his initiative that 3,000 hectares were planted with such top-grade varieties of olives as our Azerbaijan, the Turkish Gimlik and the Italian Savigliano.

"Two decades ago," he recalled, "we were just guessing whether or not the olives would bear fruit." In 1967 he made trips to Turkey and Lebanon which have climatic conditions very similar to those of Nangarhar. Today's flourish-

ing olive trees show that these efforts were not in vain. Afghanistan has become a producer of olive oil and tinned olives. Experts believe that in the future olive groves could also be planted in the provinces bordering on Pakistan—Paktia, Paktika and Kunar. But not yet—when the situation improves.

The undeclared war forced on Afghanistan has not bypassed the Nangarhar valley. Many trees have been burnt or chopped down. The local authorities have drawn up a programme to have 1,008 hectares of citrus orchards and 1,292 hectares of olive groves restored by 1990.

Each time I visit Jalalabad, I make a point of dropping into the shop of the chief of the trade and crafts guild, Mohammad Payand. Trade has been his life for more than 60 years, and he has many times carried his wares to Iran, India and Pakistan.

"Our enemies," the old merchant told me, "say that the Soviet Union is interfering in our affairs. But the Soviet people have always helped us, even when we were ruled by a king and under other regimes. They have always been with us, but then the West refused to take note of that. We hope the cooperation between our two countries will develop even more successfully. We buy a lot from your country, and we for our part can offer you our traditional goods...."

Peace and national accord

In Kabul I was received by Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Aziz.

"The April 1978 revolution," he said, "consolidated Soviet-Afghan cooperation. In the past 8 years more than 50 major projects have been completed with Soviet assistance. They include high-voltage power transmission lines from the Soviet Union to our northern regions, a satellite communication station, a rail and highway bridge over the Amu Darya River, the Jarkuduk gas fields, bakeries, mills, elevators, a cannery, machine and tractor stations, veterinary stations, seed laboratories, training centres, a polyclinic and the Institute of Social Sciences in Kabul."

The enterprises built with Soviet aid account for about 60 per cent of Afghanistan's industrial output, 100 per cent of natural gas production, all prefabricated housing panels, nitrogen fertilizers, as well as 60 per cent of electricity production.

"Given peace," continued Mohammad Aziz, "we shall be able to devote more attention to developing the oil industry. We shall be able to build an oil refinery, the Ainak ore-concentration plant, and our first railway from Kushka to Herat. We are planning all this for the current five-year-plan period."

Soviet-Afghan trade is expanding.

"The imporlant thing is," Mohammad Aziz concluded, "to balance our trade to the greatest advantage of both countries. We are trying to interest local businessmen in producing for export to the Soviet Union and other countries. Our countries are close neighbours and the planned expansion of trade in the border regions is sure to be very effective."

Today, when the country is going through what the Afghan leader Najib has described as a turning point in the history of the new Afghanistan, the overwhelming majority of the people are giving their backing to the policy of national reconciliation, uniting all political forces, social and national groups on a democratic and patriotic basis.

The orchards of Nangarhar must flourish and bear fruit.

LEONID MIRONOV
our special correspondent

Jalalabad—Kabul—Moscow

Emigrés in ferment

Afghanistan's policy of national reconciliation has provoked a grave moral crisis among the forces opposed to the Kabul regime, admits an American priest who recently met members of Hezbe Islami, the Afghan armed grouping of Yunus Khalis based in Pakistan.

The mujahiddin "elite" had no conception that the idea of national reconciliation would appeal so greatly to Afghans. The bulk of those involved in the armed struggle are weary of the perennial bloodshed. There are cases of wholesale refusal to obey chieftains' orders, and desertion is rife.

According to the priest, to date nearly 50,000 "fighters for the faith" and members of their families have laid down arms and returned home. Many of those who are still in Pakistan prefer to do nothing and, aware of Kabul's promises of amnesty, are awaiting an opportune moment to go home. As for those who are continuing to fight inside Afghanistan, their erroneous or exaggerated reports of supposedly "downed" Afghan and Russian planes and helicopters and "wrecked" tanks and armoured carriers no longer enjoy credibility in Islamabad.

The mood of the ordinary mujahiddin, according to the priest, is also being conditioned to a considerable extent by the behaviour of their leaders, who openly flout Islamic laws. They are sitting pretty in Pakistan in the lap of luxury, with villas and cars at their disposal. Black marketeering in weapons received from abroad is rife, with at least one in three U.S. Stinger missiles sold in this way. The drug traffic to the U.S. and Western Europe is on the increase, with the hundreds of millions of dollars thus netted turning the heads not only of the leaders but the rank and file who are now giving thought not to the fight, which is all but lost, but to how to line their pockets.

Despite the money and weapons received from outside, the forces opposed to Kabul are becoming irreversibly demoralized. There is ferment even among the Afghan merchants and entrepreneurs in exile who have hitherto been seen as reliable pillars of anti-government resistance. The cordons and "special actions" are unlikely to check the outflux home. The welcome accorded to those who have voluntarily surrendered has made a deep impression.

When the American priest asked them what they personally had in mind for themselves, many Hezbe Islami members said, as he put it, that they were confused and thinking increasingly of ending the fight and returning home by accepting the offer of national reconciliation.

MIKHAIL PUTINKOVSKY

Concert at the Reichstag

During the Great Patriotic War, I was appointed military commandant of the Bolshoi Theatre, and with the performers went to the front lines, call-up centres and army hospitals. A total of 5,000 concerts involving some 400 performers and entertainers were given, more often than not under bombing and shelling. In fact, one such team was lucky enough to see the banner of Victory on the Reichstag.

Opera singer Elena Mezheraup, Merited Artist of the Russian Federation, told me at the time:

"We entered Berlin with Marshal Bogdanov's tanks. The city was in flames and all around were gutted buildings and debris. It was a scene of complete chaos. On the pavement we saw Germans queueing in long lines by slaughtered horses in the hope of getting some horse meat....

"On May 4 we asked the command to let us give a concert for the soldiers who had stormed the Reichstag. The concert took place on the very next day in a Reichstag basement which the Germans had converted into an air raid shelter. Words fail to convey how moved we were when in the packed hall we saw the officers and men who had taken the Reichstag by storm. First to perform was Sergo Gotseridze. He sang a patriotic song and when he stopped there were shouts of 'Hurrah!' The soldiers tossed their caps in the air and congratulated one another on the Victory. There was stormy applause when opera singer Pyotr Selivanov, and Kiselevskaya and Anisimov of the Moscow Satire Theatre company stepped onto the stage. The concert continued even though we could hear sporadic shooting and smell gunpowder smoke, as Soviet soldiers quashed pockets of nazi resistance in the Reichstag.

"We were performing in a narrow corridor chockful of cots and beds. At one end, behind our makeshift stage, were two staircases, one spiralling upwards, the other leading out. Each nazi ferreted out would be led up the stairs past us. Colonel Fyodor Zinchenko, the Reichstag commandant, kept urging the soldiers escorting the prisoners to move more quickly, so as not to interrupt the concert. The prisoners, on the other hand, simply gaped in astonishment. Then, my turn came. I sang a couple of arias from 'Eugen Onegin' and 'Russalka' ('Mermaid'), as well as several romances and Russian songs. Next came the dancers Natalya Spasovskaya and Igor Lentovsky, and Yuli Reentovich of the Bolshoi orchestra, who, accompanied by the accordion, gave a brilliant rendering of Sarasate and Glier on his violin. Other performers included Moscow Philharmonic pianist Korolkov and Bolshoi orchestra accordion virtuoso Pyotr Shvets.

"At the close Major General Yevstignei Kashcheyev, chief political officer of the Fifth Shock Army, which had stormed the Reichstag, thanked us. 'Your songs have brought the warm breath of our Motherland, greetings from our beloved Moscow,' he said. Colonel Fyodor Zinchenko gave each performer a gift.

"Later on, we decided to leave our signatures on the wall of the Reichstag. Of course, in the crowd of soldiers we civilians must have been a rather odd sight. In fact, one soldier took us for Berliners and called out to Gotseridze: 'Hey, Fritz, where's Hitler's body?' To which Gotseridze replied: 'My dear fellow, we're looking for it too.'"

I remember the story to this day. In 1945 I too was in Berlin and greatly regretted my not being able to attend that last frontline concert, as I had been given a different assignment.

ALEXEI RYBIN
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

OPINIONS

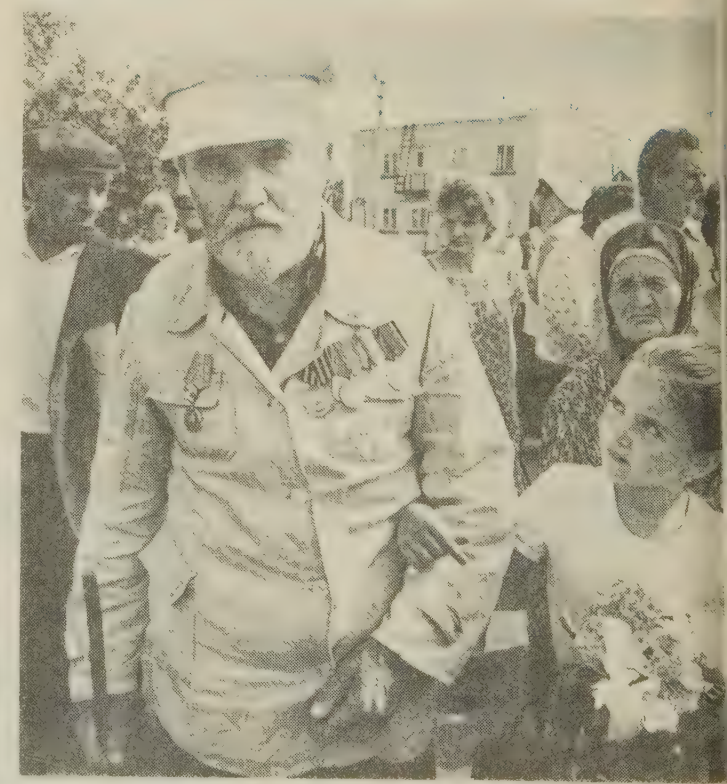
Two milestones in history

The Great October Revolution and the rout of nazism are two milestones in human history which, with the passage of time, become increasingly impressive. For if your country had not achieved these feats, the world would be plunged in slavery and shackled by reactionary anti-popular regimes.

I joined the Communist International 51 years ago. Later I joined the Communist Party. Under Franco's fascist regime, I spent eight years in prison. Today, on the eve of the anniversary of the Great Victory over Hitler Germany, I salute both war veterans and the young people who are our future, raising my clasped fist in the proletarian salute.

COSME ESCALADA MARTINEZ
Madrid, Spain

A READER'S CONTRIBUTION



The great-granddad. Photo contributed by Anatoly Burbo from Belgorod, U.S.S.R.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

I know the major

In your issue No. 8 for this year you featured a photo of the Belgian generals freed from nazi POW camps, with a Soviet officer in the centre. I know him. He is Major Alexei Kozlov, once a political officer of the political administration of the First Byelorussian Front. He was sent from near Berlin to the neighbourhood of Prenzlau. There, he was temporarily the Soviet military commandant, and in this capacity he showed every concern for the freed Belgian generals.

Unfortunately he died in 1979. No one who fought at his side during the Great Patriotic War will ever forget that fine man.

Col. (Ret.) IVAN MELNIKOV
former department chief of the political administration of the First Byelorussian Front

Ivan Melnikov gave us the Moscow address of Kozlov's family and our reporter went to see them.

Alexei Kozlov (right) with a freed Belgian general.
From the Kozlov family archives

Eight years late...

On Usievich Street in Moscow I found at home Major Kozlov's widow with her son, who incidentally bears the same name as his father, Alexei, and his family. Though elderly, Zinaida Nikolayevna is full of vigour. The first thing she did after I had introduced myself was to lay out on the table before me an array of wartime photographs, one of them a copy of the picture we published in our magazine. The others show Major Kozlov with his comrades in arms and some of the Belgians.

Let me also note that Zinaida Nikolayevna herself fought in the war, though not with her husband, but at the Fifth Shock Army HQ. She met Alexei Kozlov after V-Day in Schwerin where he had been sent in the summer of 1945. They soon married. She demobilized and stayed on as a typist at army HQ. When in 1946 Kozlov was enrolled at the Lenin Military Political Academy in Moscow, she went with him and devoted herself to her responsibilities as wife and mother until her boys had grown up.

Zinaida Nikolayevna showed me the family relics—such as her late husband's tunic to which many decorations were pinned. One was the partisan medal, of which Kozlov was particularly proud, for he had been with the partisans in the enemy rear near Gomel in Byelorussia.

Alexei Kozlov graduated from the academy with distinction in 1948. Afterwards he served as political officer in Moscow, Murmansk and again in Moscow. Upon retirement, he worked on the staff of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Trade. Zinaida Nikolayevna showed me one more precious memento—a ZIM watch, which had been presented to Kozlov for distinguished service in the Soviet Far East in 1939. Incidentally, the award was made by General Berzarin, subsequently the first Soviet commandant of liberated Berlin. "It keeps excellent time," Zinaida Nikolayevna proudly observed. Then she added with regret, "If only we had met about ten years earlier, you would have seen Alexei and you could have shared your memories of Prenzlau, the war years and the liberated Belgian generals."

ANATOLY CHLENOV

FOLLOW-UP

A duty to the future

I feel I must reply to a letter in New Times No. 5.

Does Patrick Keith really know all those who participate in anti-war and peace marches personally? If not, how can he possibly be so certain that they are all "jobless" or "idlers"? I have taken part in several such protests and know many other people who do likewise. From my knowledge many are part-time workers, shift workers, students, housewives, and pensioners though, of course, some are unemployed, as, unfortunately, many people in Australia are. I myself am a very busy, hard-working person, certainly not an idler.

Despite lack of time ordinary people do, of course, actively participate in demonstrations and marches, demanding concrete action for peace and détente from their governments. By contrast, those who are too lazy and apathetic to work for a peaceful future for us all deserve censure. Young or old, in work or unemployed, we must not shirk this great responsibility.

STEPHANIE JACKSON
Gingin, Australia

NEWSPAPERS AND OUR TIME

Albert Belyayev, D.Sc. (Philology), editor-in-chief of Sovetskaya Kultura (right) and Vladimir Nadein, a member of the Izvestia editorial board, discuss the role the Soviet press is playing in the process of reconstruction.

Photo by N. Samoilov

Nadein: Last summer, Stanislav Kondrashov, the well-known writer on international affairs, and myself went on a Mississippi cruise. I mean the peace cruise, which you will certainly remember. Both our own and the American papers covered it. As we awoke in our cabin of the old steamship Delta Queen at daybreak, we never said "Hullo" or "Good morning." Instead, we would invariably ask each other, by way of greetings, "Could you please explain the difference between Pravda and Izvestia?"

Belyayev: A rather unusual way to greet each other, even on the Mississippi.

Nadein: You see, that was the question the Americans we conversed with asked us most. No sooner had they learned we represented Izvestia than they put this question to us, politely but insistently. Another "regular" question was: "What is the difference between Pravda and TASS?" Since I am an interviewer rather than an interviewee today, I'd like to make sure that I didn't mislead the credulous foreigners. So how would you answer the question about the difference between Pravda and Izvestia?

Belyayev: It would be easier for me to explain the difference between Sovetskaya Kultura and Literaturnaya Gazeta.

Nadein: That'll be the next question.

Belyayev: Well, as a journalist who looks at his own and other papers with the eyes of a professional, I can say that Pravda is an organ of the Party's Central Committee, the voice of the Party. The day-to-day activities of the country's Party organizations from the grassroots to the top, the role the Communists are playing in the revolutionary restructuring of all aspects of our life, the forms and methods the Party uses in its work to step up the vitality of socialist society as a whole—these are some of the questions Pradva discusses from the standpoint of the Party's policy line, the resolutions of the 27th CPSU Congress and subsequent plenums of the CPSU Central Committee, and documents adopted by the CPSU Central Committee.

Izvestia is the newspaper of the Soviets. It concentrates on the functioning of the state machinery at the centre and on the periphery, on government decisions, the achievements and problems of the local Soviets which are largely responsible for the state of affairs in their respective regions, with populations running into tens or even hundreds of thousands. Pravda and Izvestia approach the same problem from different angles, the former examining the Communists' and the latter—the Soviets' handling of it.

Nadein: In other words, Pravda reflects the views of the Central Committee, and Izvestia those of its own publisher, the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, is that right?

Belyayev: What the highly-professional staffs of these two papers are doing can hardly be reduced to anything as simple as that. Just leaf through any recent issues of these papers and you will satisfy yourself that they re-create the atmosphere of our life with its heated debates and clashing opinions—each supported by a set of ingenious arguments, and so on. Neither newspaper is merely a mouthpiece of the authorities, whose ideas it is supposed to put across to the masses. It is the voice of the masses themselves and of separate individuals, social polyphony if you like. Incidentally, one shouldn't regard every view our paper takes as official. The articles, features and on-the-spot reports we carry express the opinions of their authors, more than anything else.

Nadein: Can there be a difference of opinion between Pravda and Izvestia?

Belyayev: I discussed this point when I addressed the national congress of journalists recently. It is my conviction that differences of opinion on complex matters are only natural, and to be expected, which is what our present policy of openness is all about. Debates on problems of art, literature and further economic progress have become all in a day's work. Until quite recently, i. e., before the April 1985 plenary meeting of the Central Committee, it was different. Whenever a controversial work of art came in for discussion in, say, Literaturnaya Gazeta, Literaturnaya Rossiya, socio-literary or art journals, Pravda always had the final say. The verdict was not necessarily given by a Party document appearing in this leading paper, or by its editorial. A review modestly relegated to the inside pages would be enough automatically to terminate the discussion. I hope the time of such verdicts in the shape of "reviews" is gone, never to return. I should like to stress, though, that Communists working on various newspapers and magazines have always regarded, and will continue to regard, the Pravda articles as guides. When you are on the march, ideological or otherwise, you need something to go by in order to make progress in the right direction.

Nadein: The newspaper Sovetskaya Kultura, of which you are the editor-in-chief, is published by the CPSU Central Committee, and Literaturnaya Gazeta, by the board of the Soviet Writers' Union, i. e., a creative union. Would a difference of opinion between these two papers mean that yours is the Party view, and the other paper's isn't?

Belyayev: This would be to oversimplify to the point of absurdity. Literaturnaya Gazeta has an established

reputation as a democratic mass-circulation paper. As an organ of the board of the Writers' Union, it naturally represents a broad spectrum of public and artistic opinion in its pages.

We, as a Central Committee paper, examine the same or similar artistic problems from the angle of the Party's current decisions and in relation to the Party line in the sphere of art.

Nadein: The Soviet press is often described as a Party press. You have worked on the Central Committee staff for years and held one of the leading posts in the ideological sphere. Now, as editor-in-chief of your newspaper, you can look at the processes at work in the country from a different standpoint. Could you compare the methods of Party guidance then in use with those now practised? Have the methods of Party guidance of the press undergone any substantial changes?

Belyayev: The past two years have seen dramatic changes, to my mind. As editor-in-chief I am now free to decide on my own—in consultation with the editorial board, of course—what to print. In making decisions we are guided by the positions defined by our Party in the resolutions of its congresses, plenary meetings or its Central Committee. Proceeding from our own collective understanding of our place in the implementation of Party policy we decide on the expediency of publishing this or that story. No one has the power to make us reject an article we have decided to print, and no one has ever tried to, in my experience. If the editorial board is divided on an issue, the editor-in-chief has the final say.

Nadein: Did you ever tell newspaper editors to suppress stories in your capacity as a Central Committee functionary?

Belyayev: Never. But I often had to assume the role of a consultant, so to say. Some editors sought my advice, you see, the idea being to shift the responsibility for the final decision to me. The Central Committee has now put an end to this practice. So whenever I get the urge to "consult" the Central Committee, all they tell me is: you are the editor, you know the resolutions of the Central Committee, and it is up to you to make decisions.

Nadein: Does this imply that you no longer get any directives, in whatever form?

Belyayev: That's right. But we newspapermen need political counsel, which we greatly appreciate. After the Party congress, for instance, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee convened us on two occasions to discuss the problems of reconstruction with us. They were thorough discussions centring on the place and role of the media in pursuing the Party line. We received the main guidelines for our work. We learned what the Central Committee expected of the mass media. After the January plenary meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev got us together again to deliberate how to put the line mapped out by the January plenary meeting into practice, how to enhance the media's contribution to this effort. This is a very fruitful and democratic form of leadership. There are other forms, too. For instance, meetings of editors-in-chief are held regularly by the propaganda department of the CPSU Central Committee. These meetings discuss practical ways in which newspapers can help implement the tasks the Party and its Central Committee set to the Communists, to the nation.

Nadein: Are such meetings a "one-way street"? Do you just listen and then do as you are told?

Belyayev: No, this is not monologue-style communication and guidance. The meetings we've had with the General Secretary of the Central Committee can be described as "dialogues," "discussions."

Nadein: The papers gave wide coverage to the meetings addressed by the General Secretary. Did he say anything you as editor-in-chief disagreed with?

Belyayev: No. What's more, the General Secretary submitted to the above-mentioned meetings a sweeping programme for promoting democracy, openness, criticism and self-criticism in our society. The problem now is not to dissipate the enormous charge of constructive energy we all received at those meetings.

Nadein: Could you picture the General Secretary's reaction to criticism levelled at him?

Belyayev: I think he would take it the way he demands that others should take it. In his statements, including those at meetings with newspaper editors, he stressed again and again that all of us, from rank-and-file Communists all the way up to the General Secretary, must learn to make a practice of openness, criticism and self-criticism in our increasingly democratic society.

Nadein: Foreign papers often comment on our press actively exposing shortcomings at home. Can we draw a parallel between Soviet press exposés of even the most serious shortcomings, on the one hand, and, say, the Watergate disclosures by the Washington Post journalists which led to President Nixon's impeachment?

Belyayev: All newspaper investigations have a great deal in common. What we have here, however, are entirely different directions in newspaper work.

Nadein: Still, let us try to compare the Watergate exposé with Soviet press reports, say, on the situation in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan where bribery, juggling with statistics and abuses of power had been quite common. Can you draw any parallels here at all? Or can we speak only of differences in this respect?

Belyayev: The fundamental difference is that ours is a joint effort by the Party and the people to cleanse society of the filth that has accumulated in it over the past two decades. As for the Western papers, they, as a rule, express the interests of different political groups that are in competition with each other.

Nadein: What forms of opposition to newspaper criticism do you come up against?

Belyayev: Obstruction, for instance. Last January we carried a sharply critical article about the Sverdlovsk opera and ballet theatre. A conflict had broken out there between some members of the company and the new artistic director, who had made the theatre one of the most popular in the country over a short period. Its production of the opera "The Prophet" has been recommended for a U.S.S.R. state prize. But some in the company, who did not want changes, began an unprincipled fight against the new artistic director. We sent a special correspondent over to investigate, but no sooner had he returned (with his story still in the raw) than I had a long-distance call from Sverdlovsk. A voice at the other end of the line complained that our man had talked with "wrong" people, visited "wrong" places and drawn "wrong" conclusions.

Nadein: That is, they tried to deny a story which hadn't even been written yet.

Belyayev: Which wasn't even ready to be written! Don't rush things, I told them, give the journalist a chance to set out his position, and then we shall see. We published his report. The district Party committee and some of the company disagreed with our stand on the matter. Passions ran high at the theatre. The more progressive members of the company supported the paper. Finally, the Sverdlovsk city committee of the CPSU discussed the situation and also took our side. As you see, newsmen seldom have a dull moment.

Nadein: Any Western newspaper editor is afraid of financial losses, of losing his influence in the business world, of getting into his advertising clients' black books. What is a Soviet newspaper editor afraid of?

Belyayev: The only thing the Soviet newspaper editor is afraid of in the present situation is losing his readers' trust in him. Notably our leading papers have attracted an extra 14-million-plus subscribers over the past year. The people demand that our papers should cover our life as it really is, pulling no punches, expose shortcomings and, at the same time, give more space to the brighter side of things, hold up whatever can set the readers a good example. As soon as we start beating

about the bush instead of using plain language, readers react right away with an avalanche of indignant letters asking, "Why don't you tell us the whole truth? Why don't you call a spade a spade?"

Nadein: Soviet newspaper circulations are enormous, unmatched in the West. Nevertheless, Soviet papers do not measure up to international standards in volume. Do you consider it a forced measure? Will Soviet papers ever assume the dimensions of those found elsewhere in the world?

Belyayev: Personally, I don't see any special reason for making our papers bulkier. Look what these voluminous Western periodicals are crammed with: advertisements, society and demimonde gossip, stock exchange bulletins, etc., with actual news taking up hardly more space than our papers give it. There is no denying the fact that now, in the years of reconstruction, the reader demands that this or that newspaper should tackle a wider range of issues. In compliance with the wishes of readers and the creative unions Sovetskaya Kultura is to add, as from 1988, four more pages to its present eight, which will be given over expressly to the cinema and the theatre. On the whole, though, I don't think it necessary to swell our papers.

Nadein: Do you think Soviet papers will ever carry commercial ads?

Belyayev: My paper won't, anyway.

Nadein: Journalists come in a high-income bracket the world over. There are newspapers that boast of paying some of their staff writers six-figure salaries. How do Soviet journalists compare with other professional people in this respect?

Belyayev: On the whole, journalists are somewhat higher paid than the average engineer in our country. Furthermore, capable journalists doing a lot of writing augment their incomes with fees—quite substantial ones, too. Still, I think our journalists are not adequately remunerated for their work. Although exciting, the work is hard, it takes a great deal of time and energy.

Nadein: Do the incomes of those who make a newspaper depend on its circulation?

Belyayev: They don't.

Nadein: The Western press takes pride in its sensationalism, and the Soviet press in its truthfulness. Do Soviet papers ever make mistakes? In the event of their doing so, how is a mistake corrected?

Belyayev: Mistakes do occasionally creep in, whereupon the parties concerned can lodge a protest with us. If the protest is well founded, we do, of course, put things right.

Nadein: Does this mean that if a film maker or a stage director whose work you've criticized brings you an article taking a different view, you publish the article without fail?

Belyayev: If the view is well argued, yes.

Nadein: Are there any taboos?

Belyayev: Calls for war or the overthrow of the Soviet government are taboo.

Nadein: What else would you keep out of your paper on principle?

Belyayev: Any attempts to square private accounts with anyone or use the paper to uphold group interests.

Nadein: Can one buy newspaper space to keep what's printed in it beyond the editor's control?

Belyayev: Not in our paper. We neither print ads, nor sell space.

Nadein: Keen interest is now being displayed the world over in Soviet life in general and in Soviet journalists' work in particular. It is quite obvious that the press has a very important role to play in the processes now under way. How would you define the main target of press criticism in the course of the present drive for reconstruction?

Belyayev: Our target is red tape in all its forms and manifestations. A characteristic feature of red tape is administration by mere injunction. What we are seeking is a changeover to people's self-government, with the people adequately informed and forming their judgements on the basis of this information.

Nadein: As a member of the Board of the Union of Soviet Journalists, do you think professional cooperation between Soviet and foreign journalists possible? Close contacts between Soviet journalists and their opposite numbers in socialist countries were established long ago. Are there any prospects of us entering into similar relationships with our Western colleagues? Doctors, physicists, biologists and men of letters are joining hands in the fight for peace. Why can't journalists make common effort for peace on earth?

Belyayev: I'm sure they can, because such an effort would be of utmost importance.

Nadein: This interview will appear in print right after Day of the Soviet Press. On this occasion, therefore, let us look a year or two ahead. We keep saying that reconstruction, the process of revolutionary transformation, must gain momentum and yield tangible fruit.... What changes do you expect your paper, and the Soviet press in general, to have undergone by, say, May 5, 1989?

Belyayev: I hope that in the next few years our paper will afford its readers, both professional people and the general public, more chances to speak up, and pit their judgement against those of others in search of the truth. On the whole, all our papers will mirror the implementation of the main political slogan of reconstruction which is: more democracy, more socialism! ■

On the night of April 25, 1986, the fourth reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant went wrong. Since then Chernobyl has featured prominently on newspaper and magazine pages, in radio and TV programmes. This tragic event has evoked an avalanche of questions—about its effects on human health, mostly.

How it was in Kiev

In May 1986 I became keenly aware, perhaps for the first time in my life, how much journalists can do in this world of ours.

I had no time to have a good look at the bustling and (hackneyed though it may sound) truly beautiful city of Kiev: I had to shuttle between Kiev and Chernobyl 130 kilometres away, returning to my hotel late at night. During the night I had to process what I had seen during the day, and couch it in articulate reports which I dictated to my office in the morning.

So it went on day after day, night after night.

And now about what makes the journalist's profession useful. The thirst for information here in Kiev and probably all over the country—the Chernobyl accident alarmed the whole nation—was almost physical. One day after my arrival, as I pushed open the glass door of my hotel, I knew what questions I would be asked. The girls in reception greeted me with the same queries: "How are things in Chernobyl? What's the radiation level?" Everyone wanted details, more details.

The interest was absolutely sincere, as were the many inquiries about my own health. Apparently reassured by my appearance, they tried to proceed from that to assess the (in the main exaggerated) danger of radiation for themselves. If I was making daily trips into "the eye of the storm" (or so they thought), their families, children and friends were under no direct threat from radiation. But, on the other hand, they daily received a very different, panicky kind of information from across the street where the airlines and railway booking offices were. There were no tickets, and scalpers who materialized out of nowhere offered tickets at fantastic prices. Newspapers were passed from person to person and arguments flared up over conflicting reports about Chernobyl. People were avid for more and more information.

Uncertainty, anxiety. Fears real and imagined. I remember the conflicting emotions of pain, irritation and the desire to do something at the sight of a crowd of people besieging an office. Homeless children and women! Later I

A year after the disaster

Reminiscences and reflections

ANDREI ILLESH

learned that these people had abandoned their homes without waiting for organized evacuation. Now they were having to pay for it. They were looking for someone to decide their fate. But then who could blame them? If they had fled from a mysterious (and therefore all the more dreadful) peril it meant that there were no specialists around to explain what was happening and convince them of their folly. There was no one around to put them on buses to evacuate, as had happened to tens of thousands of others.

A host of contradictory images of this kind come to mind. I recall, for example, an old woman sitting on a tree-shaded bench in the courtyard of a five-storey house. Her chin was yellow from the iodine tincture she was drinking. "What do you think you're doing?" I asked her. She explained that she was treating herself. She said it was very good and completely harmless, for she was chasing it down with yoghurt. It was impossible to make her see reason. The same day it became known that most of the patients in Kiev's clinics were not victims of radiation but of treating themselves. Many were suffering from scalded oesophagi.

The media were hard put to dispel these myths.

People were having to pay for lack of information. On the other hand, frightening people and exaggerating the disaster would also have been dangerous. You can imagine how precise and considered the words and actions of specialists, heads of commissions to deal with the consequences of the accident, and all those involved in evacuating thousands of people had to be. I am grateful to those scientists, economic managers and Party workers who, in a difficult situation, faced the truth and were not afraid to tell everything to the journalists, which meant to everyone.

Much of what used to be of interest only to specialists was the concern of everyone. And no wonder: radiation had a direct bearing on our health. Just how great was the hazard? To find out, let us look at the past.

Radiation hazard: real and imagined

Every individual is constantly exposed to ionizing radiation. Natural radiation background exists everywhere. The average natural radiation dose is about 100 milliroentgens a year. In some parts of the world radiation background is above average. For example, it is five or six times the norm in the state of Kerala in India, in Brazil and in the Massif Central in France. This, however, is not a health hazard.

In addition to natural radiation, people receive radiation doses in medical checkups. These vary from country to country. In the Soviet Union the dose is about 140 milliroentgens a year, in Japan, 180 and in Poland, 160. We absorb another 150 milliroentgens yearly through living in modern houses: brick and concrete contain radioactive elements.

These then are the three factors—the natural radiation background of the Earth, medical tests and indoor radiation—that constitute the average annual dose for each one of us. For a country dweller it amounts to about 350 and for a city dweller to about 500 milliroentgens a year.

The Chernobyl accident naturally introduced changes in the above calculations. But how great? Will they tell on the health of the inhabitants of Pripyat, the surrounding villages and Kiev, and if so, to what extent? Before answering these questions let us review man's experience with radiation.

The impact of radiation on the human organism, and its unfavourable genetic consequences have been studied ever since people began to work with it. Roentgenologists did not immediately take to wearing thick rubber gloves: cancer of the skin, an occupational disease, was one of the first manifestations of the long-term effect of radiation overdose received by doctors who used the as yet ill-shielded X-ray equipment. Observations of, say, uranium miners and survivors of the A-bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki made it certain that radiation is carcinogenic.

During the atomic explosions in the Japanese cities, between 8 and 10 per cent of the population were exposed to over 200 rads.* Another part of the

At the experimental hothouse in Pripyat.

Photo by A. Fyodorov

* Rad is a unit of absorbed dose of ionizing radiation equal to an energy of 0.01 joule per kilogramme of irradiated material.

population received a dose of over 100 rads. It was these groups of people who were the casualties of the atomic blasts. As for roentgenologists, not all of them fell ill, but only those who had begun working before the 1930s, when the X-ray equipment was primitive. Moreover, at that time there were no fixed safety exposure rates. Later, when working conditions were improved and radiation rate restricted to about 5 rems* a year, the incidence of cancer among them was reduced to an average level. Prolonged observation (20 to 30 years) of people who worked with various sources of radiation in different countries within permissible norms have shown no difference in the rate of malignancies between these and other groups of the population.

And yet...

In the year since the accident I have become confirmed in one unusual observation. The thirst for basic factual and numerical information has not been quenched. People continue to ask the same questions, to which answers have been published many times. Why is this? I think that while initially there were more questions asked about the accident and its concomitants than there were answers, later, as from last summer, our press has been inundated with articles connected with nuclear energy. In the spate of information many people overlooked the answers to their questions. Before we continue to consider the radiological consequences of Chernobyl for people's health, let me cite some of the questions and answers published in our newspapers.

How many people were on the premises of the power plant during the accident?

On the night of April 25 there were 176 people manning the four reactors at the Chernobyl plant. Furthermore, 268 builders and assembly workers were doing a night shift on the site of the fifth and sixth reactors some 1,500 metres to the southeast.

How big was the release of fission products from the damaged reactor?

At the time of the explosion 20-22 megacuries of radiation were released. Subsequently, the daily release of radioactivity into the atmosphere continued on a decreasing scale and had largely stopped by the 6th of May. The total amount of radiation released was about 50 megacuries, about 3.5 per cent of the total quantity of radionuclides in the reactor.

How many people were hospitalized?

A total of 300 people, of whom 237 were suffering from varying degrees of radiation sickness. 129 of the 300 were flown to Moscow in three flights as early as April 27. They were the most serious cases, needing sophisticated medical help.

How many people died as a result of the accident?

Thirty-one. All were members of the plant's staff or firemen. 28 people died of acute radiation sickness.

Were there any victims in the cities and villages situated close to the plant?

A thorough examination of several hundred thousand people did not reveal a single case of radiation sickness.

Could the Chernobyl accident have caused radiation sickness in other countries?

That is out of the question. At an expert estimate, the biggest dose that could have been received by people in Europe did not exceed the dose of radiation air passengers get on a Paris-Los Angeles return air flight.

Expert forecast

Although medical radiology has amassed considerable experience, specialists are still cautious in their predictions and avoid giving categorical answers. Some data already exist. It is considered an established fact that a radiation dose in excess of 100 rems does have long-term consequences in the form of cancer and genetic disorders. Radiation sickness can be caused by a single dose of upwards of 75-100 rems. For all the guarded attitude of experts attempting to predict the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, the risk of long-term radiation consequences on any appreciable scale is believed to be infinitesimal.

Professor Victor Knizhnikov, a member of the Soviet commission on radiation protection, believes that the hazard of extra radiation as a result of the accident is far less than the risk of being killed in a car crash or dying of lung cancer because of smoking. The people of Kiev run a smaller risk of cancer than those who live near a big modern coal-fuelled power station. The dose the inhabitants of Kiev could have received in the month following the accident was 150 milliroentgens.

Doctors are especially interested in the effect of radiation on children, especially those born after the accident and yet to be born. From previous observations on babies born to X-ray doctors who worked with early equipment we know that there has been no substantial change in the genetic stock, or in the health of children and grandchildren. There is the same ratio of male and female births, and they have the same height and weight, develop in the same way and reveal the same hereditary features as the rest of us.

But these are theoretical arguments. What does Chernobyl indicate in practice?

For several months information on the first thousand children born after the accident has been available. The babies have indeed given obstetricians a lot of trouble. On average, they weighed heavier than usually, about 4 kilogrammes at birth. Obstetricians didn't like that and mothers, too, had a hard time. The main reason for the heavy babies was that the expectant mothers were hospitalized immediately after the disaster. And they were overnourished. The change in way of life and diet resulted in big babies.

This is not to suggest that radiation is safe and absolutely under doctors' control. But, unlike other influences on the human organism, for example, that of chemical agents, doctors have precise scales relating radiation doses to possible consequences. Their optimistic forecasts are not based on a hunch but on the established relationship between the radiation dose and the magnitude of the health hazard.

The possible increase of cancer incidence in the areas most exposed to radioactive contamination was put at 1-1.5 per cent. These data, presented by Soviet doctors to the extraordinary session of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna last autumn, remain valid today. Let me stress that the forecast gives a worst-case scenario. Detailed and precise measurement of the doses received has produced new data which go to show that the initial assessments of the radiation level were greatly exaggerated (5-10 times over for some areas). This means that the figure of 1-1.5 per cent will most likely be adjusted downwards.

Chernobyl—Moscow

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* Rem is the dosage of any ionizing radiation that will cause the same amount of biological injury to human tissue as one roentgen of X-ray or gamma-ray dosage. One rem corresponds to one rad absorbed.

A ban on the nuclear bomb

Professor KAREN KHACHATUROV,
Deputy Chairman of Soviet Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Latin America

It may seem paradoxical that of the vast densely populated regions of the world Latin America, which had never experienced the impact of modern bombs and artillery shells, should have become the first nuclear-free zone. But it was neither the spontaneous winds of history nor its whim that made the Latin Americans trailblazers in the creation of zones free of nuclear arms, both local and foreign. Several factors explain their decision. First of all, they did not want to repeat the great sin committed by their northern neighbour of being the first and, fortunately, so far the last to drop atomic bombs on human beings. They did not want to be drawn into the dangerous and hazardous nuclear arms race.

The Caribbean crisis of 1962, when Washington's imperialist policy and the confrontation of the two biggest nuclear powers threatened mankind with the most unpredictable consequences, prompted the Latin Americans to formalize their non-nuclear status in law.

The first international document to do this became known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That is the name of the district of the Mexican capital where in 1967, at the Mexican foreign ministry, the plenipotentiary representatives of fourteen Latin American countries signed the document that was destined to be a milestone in history.

The fact that it was Mexico that put forward the idea of declaring Latin America a nuclear-free zone has its historical logic. Let us remember the Mexican insurgents with bandoliers across their chests and sombreros pushed to the backs of their heads led by the legendary peasant leaders Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. They became symbols of the biggest popular revolution in Latin America in the early 20th century. Then Mexico became the first country in the Western Hemisphere to establish diplomatic relations with the young Soviet state, almost ten years earlier than its northern neighbour, the U.S. Considering the circumstances prevailing at the time, this took both foresight and political will. When fascism came to power in Spain, Mexico was the only capitalist country to break off diplomatic relations with Madrid. They were not restored until after Franco's death. The descendants of the proud Aztecs did not yield to North American blackmail and were the sole people in the continent to maintain diplomatic relations with Havana during the period of the shameful anti-Cuban "collective sanctions."

Mexico and other Latin American countries have patently proved that the movement for a nuclear-free world is organically linked with the assertion in international relations of the principles of justice and civilized standards incompatible with the pursuit of big-stick policy and gunboat diplomacy. Mexico is an active member of the Contadora Group, which is pressing for the solution of the conflict in Central America by peaceful, political means. It is a member of the Delhi Six, a unique coalition of states in four continents fighting for an end to the nuclear arms race, banning nuclear weapons and subsequently eliminating them altogether.

The opponents of the creation of nuclear-free zones continue to cavil that not all Latin American countries are party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Indeed, it is true that some have not signed the treaty, others have signed but not ratified it, while still others have ratified it but not implemented it.

Washington's stand is hypocritical: after publicly supporting the Treaty of Tlatelolco, it made its support dependent on a number of reservations. The treaty has no clear-cut provision prohibiting the transportation by third countries of atomic weapons across the territory of Latin American countries. Washington has used this loophole to reserve its right to transport nuclear arms through the Panama Canal and deploy them at its bases outside the United States.

Who can vouch for the absence of atomic bombs at the Guantanamo base, Cuban territory held by the American military? It is for this reason that the Cuban government, which has consistently supported banning nuclear arms, has not been able to sign the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The Soviet Union signed and ratified the supplementary protocol to the treaty on recognizing Latin America's nuclear-free status but, in connection with the U.S. stand, also made certain reservations.

Despite all its shortcomings, we view the Treaty of Tlatelolco as one of the mainstays of the future edifice of an all-embracing system of international security. Significantly, it serves as a restraint on those who dream of joining the "nuclear club" in one way or another. For even today Pakistani generals, South African racists and Israeli rulers covet the atomic bomb.

At the same time, the Treaty of Tlatelolco stimulates peace initiatives. One of them is the proposal by Brazil to make the expanses of the South Atlantic—from Latin America to Africa—a zone of peace and cooperation. This initiative was formalized in a resolution adopted by the 42nd U.N. General Assembly. Only one delegate, that of the U.S., voted against it.

The force of example is beneficial. Latin America's non-nuclear status has in the eyes of many sceptics turned this at first sight Quixotic dream into a tangible reality. Almost twenty years later the Treaty of Rarotonga declared the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone. The Soviet Union and China have expressed readiness undeviatingly to observe the non-nuclear status of this vast region.

But Washington sabotages all efforts aimed at amputating the tentacles of nuclear death, as was manifested once again in its refusal to support the Treaty of Rarotonga. As the U.S. News and World Report observed: "Asian friends and allies are upset and angry... What American officials say they are concerned about is setting a precedent. They fear that a proliferation of nuclear-free zones—others have been proposed for the Balkans and Scandinavia—could threaten the U.S. strategy of nuclear deterrence."

The Latin American countries were the trailblazers in creating nuclear-free zones. Treaties with resounding and exotic names—the Amerindian Tlatelolco and the Polynesian Rarotonga—are helping form a new moral climate throughout the world. ■

People aren't leaving Sahy any more...

because it's become more advantageous to work there

From our special correspondent
LEV YELIN

We sped at 120 km. an hour along the highway cutting through vast fields. It was always the same endless black-earth plain around and we seemed to make no progress at all.

"We call this stretch between two branches of the Danube Grain Island," explained my companion, a newsman from the Bratislava Praca. "There are 40,000 hectares of fertile lands here, each yielding 7-8 tons of grain."

Turning to the east, we left the rich black-earth fields behind and found ourselves in an area where four tons per hectare is considered a good crop, the Sahy state farm near the town of Levice.

After the two successive bumper crops of 1984 and 1985 (each year some 12 million tons was brought in), which made Czechoslovakia self-sufficient in cereals, farmers fell short of plan quotas by 5 per cent in 1986. The average dropped from 5 tons to 4.2 tons per hectare. Of course, you cannot call this crop failure. The grain stocks of recent years took care of the population and livestock. And yet there is cause for dissatisfaction. Several reasons for this setback were named, among them drought, inclement weather in August, during harvesting, and the numerous problems facing the country's agriculture.

Argument

Three men were arguing heatedly in the as yet unfinished canteen. They turned out to be the heads of three nearby farms. I was introduced to Milan Sloboda of the Lenin cooperative, Jan Luptak of Pramen cooperative, and Miroslav Brestovsky of Sahy state farm.

Throughout Czechoslovakia there are 1,680 agricultural cooperatives with an average 2,600 hectares of land each. They account for two thirds of the country's agricultural output and unite over 620,000 farmers. (The figures are for 1986.) There are only 159 state farms, though they are bigger. On average, a state farm has 8,600 hectares. In Slovakia, state farms own 15 per cent of the arable land.

"The land is better in their cooperatives," Miroslav Brestovsky nods in the direction of his colleagues. They deny this but I feel they in effect agree with him.

State farms in general have less fertile land, and this is a fact of life. True, the last five-year plan (1981-85) saw attempts to alter the situation. Land was redistributed between state farms and cooperatives, allowing some state farms operating at a loss to make a stride forward. For all that, the survey conducted in 1986 revealed the still considerable discrepancies in performance between state farms and cooperatives.

"Perhaps our land is better," Milan Sloboda reluctantly agrees.

"And you have more people," Miroslav Brestovsky presses on.

The two jibe at each other and bandy words at every opportunity. Jan Luptak, who is somewhat older, smiles good-naturedly, for he is aware that they shared a room in the hostel of the agricultural academy at the town of Nitra and have been friends ever since. They have a thorough knowledge of each other's farms and compete literally in everything. After graduation, Milan Sloboda worked for some time under Luptak on Pramen farm, but he failed to impress the chairman.

"I was mistaken," Jan Luptak admits. "Today we are at once neighbours and rivals."

"And we all need conscientious workers," Brestovsky adds. "But they are not easy to come by. Indeed, I can fire a bad farmer, and they," he nodded at his colleagues, "will take him on at once."

As pay is higher in the cooperatives—a monthly wage average of 3,100 crowns as against 2,960 in the state farms early last year—people are more willing to work there.

So, manpower is scarce. But Slovakian papers report that young people are now taking a greater interest in farming. There are four applicants for every place at agricultural institutes.

"The graduates don't come to my farm though," Brestovsky says with a sigh. "On the contrary, I have to bend over backwards to keep young people here. It's all very simple—we have to do everything that people should want to stay and work here, to earn good money. Then we can demand good work from them. I can allot a plot of only 2 ares (1 are=119.6 sq. yards). The plot is different every year, but the soil is always good. The state farm does the ploughing and provides water and electricity. And Milan gives 10 ares, so he has fewer problems with cadres."

It turned out, however, that people have stopped leaving Brestovsky as well.

Changes

Of late, measures have been taken in Slovakia to help the state farms since they are in a less advantageous position as compared with the cooperatives. However, the Hospodarske Noviny reports, appreciable changes for the better have not been registered in most of them.

Yet Brestovsky, who took over a flagging Sahy state farm in 1982, has got things going. Grain yields reached 4.1 tons per hectare in 1985. Last year was not so successful, but on the whole the state farm made good progress. And it coped with the unfavourable weather and drought better than the neighbouring cooperatives. Why?

"The standard of management has improved considerably," said his deputy and secretary of the farm's party organization Pavol Stutika, who showed me around Sahy. He has been here since 1967. He showed me a grain storage unit with a built-in drier. It husks 3.5 tons and dries 50 tons of grain an hour. It was bought under Brestovsky and cost millions, even with a state subsidy. Isn't this too risky a step for a farm just getting onto its feet?

"It was all well thought out," Stutika assures me. "We mastered the drier quickly, and now it serves our neigh-

May 9, 1945, is Czechoslovakia's national holiday. That day saw the completion of its people's national liberation struggle as the Soviet army brought it deliverance from the nazi occupiers.

Shown here is Bratislava's monument to the Soviet liberator soldier.

bours as well, for it is the only one in the region, and the demand is great. We hope to recoup our outlay quickly. And not every farm can boast such a grain storage unit, which can take 5,000 tons of grain."

Last year the country lacked storage facilities for about a million tons of cereal.

"Meet Julius Macsadi," says Pavol Stutika. "He began as an excavator operator, and is now in charge of the drier and the storage."

Julius, who is thirty, has been at Sahy for six years. His wife works here as an accountant. What has changed since 1982? Julius says things are run here in a "more cultured" way. He earns 2,700 crowns a month. He could have made more in town but he likes farming as he is of peasant stock. True, his family of four lives in town, in a two-room flat. How does he commute? By car—he has a Skoda of his own, worth 70,000 crowns. Did he run into debt to buy it? Or make use of the credit the state grants to young families? Or did his parents help him?

"I went to work at 15, so I did it all on my own. When I got married I already had savings. And now we get extra money from marketing tomatoes we grow on the 4 ares the farm has given our family. Every day my wife collects our two kids from the kindergarten, and I go to till the plot. True, I return home very late, but this year we expect to make some 30,000 crowns from the vegetable garden."

"Our farm is young," Stutika goes on. "The chairman and I are the eldest—we are rising forty. In 1982 many young people came to the farm. The chairman welcomed it, for he thinks they assimilate new ideas more readily and are themselves able to innovate. He believes in them, takes care of their earnings, and builds new houses for them."

People in Slovakia prefer to build their own homes, both in town and country. Annually, about 10,000 families move into such dwellings. Sometimes workers refuse the flats the enterprise offers them, and wait till their turn for a plot comes. Then they build a house for one or two families. The state sells such people building materials and grants long-term credits to a total of up to 150,000 crowns at an annual interest of 2.7 per cent. Usually, the sum is not enough, for such a house costs 300,000-400,000 crowns. In a word, it is not easy to build a house. And in Sahy workers get one free of charge: two-storey cottages for two families, with three or four rooms per family, a garage and cellar, and an 8-are plot. The state farm has to pay 400,000-430,000 crowns for such house, and the tenants just pay the rent.

Twenty houses are effectively ready, others are nearing completion. In the course of this five-year plan, Stutika says, three or four houses will be ready for occupancy every year.

I liked what I saw in Sahy. Independent thinking, farsightedness, and practical, competent concern for people. True, there is the other side of the coin. Vegetable plots and houses are all very well. But they are all sidelines. The main problem is to boost people's interest in the end result of their work, in this case grain output, to so arrange it that their work in this area brings them prosperity, and the plot is just a supplement. And what does this require? In the first place, presumably, direct and close links between earnings and performance.

For several years farming and foodstuffs complex management in Czechoslovakia has been undergoing modernization with only two obligatory indices left for agricultural enterprises—grain and meat deliveries to the state. The rest of the output they are free to use at their own discretion, in accordance with their contract obligations. A wage coefficient is being introduced in agriculture taking account of the annual output increment. But the crop-wages mechanism has not yet been adjusted. Hence the farms vie with one another in giving workers various "side" benefits.

Levelling!

The fourth plenum of the CPCz Central Committee held last December discussed the new five-year plan of the country's social and economic development. It concluded that enterprises' profits and workers' wages should depend directly on their performance. This is considered to be of key significance for the restructuring of the economic mechanism. I saw for myself during my stay in Slovakia that this is what is needed for all echelons of the farming and foodstuffs complex.

"Then our economic system will become optimal," says Jozef Bugan, deputy head of a poultry factory at the town of Dunajska Streda. He does not think the present system optimal.

There are six poultry factories in Western Slovakia, with the head enterprise in Bratislava. Not all perform equally well. In Topolcany the enterprise has excellent new equipment, and productivity and profits are high. The Dunajska Streda factory is also doing well—it earned 11 million crowns last year. All profits go to Bratislava and are subsequently redistributed. As a rule, the flagging enterprises get more and the efficient ones less, to maintain the balance. It is far from being the best policy.

"The enterprises operating at a loss should be closed," Bugan thinks, "and not run at the expense of the front-rankers. To all intents and purposes, the process has already begun.

"In 1968 we shall restructure the processing of the slaughtered poultry. Productivity will rise, and the number of those employed in the process will drop by half. And earnings will increase."

But money is needed for the reconstruction. And with levelling, when you have to share the profits with flagging enterprises, it is not easy to get it.

The Czechoslovak farming and foodstuffs complex has serious tasks to tackle. Their solution depends in no small measure on whether or not advanced management methods become the norm everywhere and benefits "on the side" are ousted by high wages for excellent performance.

Bratislava—Sahy—
Dunajska Streda—Moscow

Mr "No"

Believed by some to wield no less influence in the Pentagon than even Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger himself, he's been dubbed the Prince of Darkness and was once introduced at a panel discussion as the man responsible for World War III.

The worthy endowed with these unusual sobriquets in the Western press is Richard Norman Perle, the 45-year-old aide to the Pentagon chief.

His nominal place in the DOD pecking order is nowhere near the top but, the Hamburg-based weekly Der Spiegel observed, "whether on the two superpower relations or warheads, missile range or throw weight, his word matters more than that of generals and ministers." He takes the liberty of interrupting U.S. and foreign politicians and slighting members of Ronald Reagan's cabinet. The outgoing Assistant Secretary of Defence is a pet of both Reagan and Weinberger, and the Washington administration's grey eminence.

Perle's career dates from the autumn of 1969 when the "Boeing Senator" Henry Jackson noticed a young lobbyist for the Westinghouse military-industrial concern, who was pushing an anti-missile concept in Washington.

The grandson of Jewish emigrants from Russia, Perle is an intellectual who only briefly flirted with liberal ideas during his studies at the London School of Economics before taking up with conservatives convinced that all the evil in the world comes from the Kremlin.

"It's not farewell. See you later."
Cartoon by N. Shcherbakov

They got into step in no time at all, boycotting everything that could smooth relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Perle was effectively the author of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which not only disrupted trade links between the two countries but also scotched efforts to improve the Soviet-U.S. relationship.

After joining the Jackson team, Perle demonstrated a stubborn consistence as he sabotaged all the arms control plans and agreements of four American presidents.

Perle vigorously opposed practically all arms limitation agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union, including the ABM treaty of 1972, SALT-1 and SALT-2. He opposed Soviet initiatives on chemical weapons, an end to nuclear testing, and a ban on anti-satellite systems and preventing the militarization of outer space in general. Together with Weinberger and Lieutenant General James Abrahamson, director of the SDI Organization, he is now pressing for an "initial" ABM defence to be deployed as early as within the next few years.

Perle made his creed known when he said cynically that he would never take the view that the Americans and the Russians could resolve their differences through agreements, and then trust that those accords would be honoured.

This posture explains why he describes the idea of a nuclear-free world as a harmful misconception, non-nuclear deterrence as a dangerous illusion, effective verification of the dismantling of nuclear arms as impossible, nuclear testing as vital, a ban on chemical weapons as unfeasible, and the concept of nuclear-free zones as having no future.

Intermittently striking the pose of a Roman procurator, Perle chided West European capitals for lack of zeal in the arms race and reluctance to do less business with socialist nations. I remember him in a debate at the Geneva Palace of Nations in late 1985, in which I also took part. Then too the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence adopted the tone of a mentor to lecture the West Europeans. He juggled with figures to convince them of an alarming "Soviet advantage" in missile forces and to justify the U.S. "star wars" programme and its refusal to negotiate disarmament in good faith.

And now it has been announced that the Reagan administration's favourite is giving up his post. After many years in government service, Perle is reported to have decided to start making money in earnest. In a book project he has offered publishers he said he was going to lift the lid on his experience of working in Washington.

Is his decision to quit, however, explained only by literary ambition and financial considerations? His rise to prominence has been on the crest of the wave of messianic claims and blind chauvinism embodied by the Reagan administration. He sensed the advent of the right-wing bandwagon and was able to climb onto it just in time. Seeking to blow the whole international system of treaties restraining the arms race, the U.S. military-industrial complex needed a man who could provide the subtlest and most sophisticated pretexts for vetoing any sensible disarmament ideas. Perle did that better than anyone else. His comments on détente were seen as too hostile even by some people in the Pentagon.

And now, he is leaving. Is it the end of an era—the era of Washington's a priori rejection of any disarmament accords? Or is it perhaps that Perle himself has stepped on one of the numerous mines he has laid on the paths to compromise and agreement? Such as the "zero option" proposal on medium-range missiles, which he once formulated in the hope of blocking talks and which is now being seriously considered as the basis for a possible treaty?

It seems to me, however, that the main reason for Perle's resignation is that he believes the planned objectives to have largely been achieved. The legacy of the administration to which he belongs and which is now being abandoned by even the more faithful of its minions is the costliest and most dangerous arms race in history.

Perle's resignation, however, is rather odd. He is leaving only to stay put. Weinberger is keeping him on at the Pentagon as a "consultant."

The services the Pentagon's grey eminence has to offer continue to be in demand.

ALBERT GRIGORYANTS

On the eve of the bicentenary

Being "down under" does not isolate Australia from world problems

It is generally believed that Australians as a whole prefer not to talk about Politics with a capital P. If one is to believe certain Australian sources, the national trait is a certain lightheartedness: "We are more inclined to think about how to amuse ourselves than how to work"—seems to be the message of popular booklets about life on the continent, as for example, "Australian Etiket" or "How to Survive in Australia."

"Crocodile Dundee"

Personally I think it would be wrong to accept the image of Australians created by such books, especially as this image has been undergoing very rapid changes lately. It looks as if the Australians themselves have not decided who they are and how they differ from other peoples. As, next January, it will be 200 years since the first group of convicts from Britain were landed in Australia, thereby starting the European colonization of the continent, this is something that is much discussed today. Who should be regarded as genuine Australians? This is far from being a simple question. Apart from the 160,000 aborigines and the predominance of settlers from the British Isles, there are growing Italian, Greek and Turkish urban communities, as well as neighbourhoods of people from Asian and Arab countries. All these immigrants make for a very mixed demographic picture, for by no means all of them become assimilated, many preferring to retain their national traditions and customs.

The film industry has also contributed to the formation of the image of the modern Australian. The recent film "Crocodile Dundee" has been a top box-office success in the United States and Western Europe.

The story briefly is as follows. A young girl reporter from New York learns that in a small God-forsaken town in the Northern Territory of Australia there lives a crocodile hunter by the name of Mick Dundee and decides to go out there and bring back a story. Mick (played by the popular actor Paul Hogan) deliberately shows off his contempt for modern life (for instance, he uses a razor-sharp knife to shave instead of the usual Gillette). His knowledge of life in the bush is indeed great: he knows the habits of the animals, hunts for crocodiles and is quite at home with the aborigines. The American girl, fascinated by his wildness and in gratitude for his having virtually snatched her from the jaws of a crocodile, invites Dundee, who has never been to a big city, to New York. The film goes on to show Dundee's adventures in the New World. Compared with the pragmatic Americans, always looking for a profit for themselves, Dundee proves to be much more humane and noble. His reward in the film is the love of the young American reporter.

And in real life, which picture is right? Are Australians rough ignoramuses capable only of tilling the land and tending their sheep, or are they able to compete with the most advanced nations in any field of industry, science and technology? Australia's economic situation today provides plenty of grounds for such arguments. The country has now entered a long-drawn-out period of crisis. The first to sound the alarm was the Treasurer Paul Keating in the spring of last year. He said the country's outdated economic structure threatened to turn it into another "banana republic," i.e., a raw materials appendage to the capitalist world economy.

Indeed, Australia's once flourishing economy based on the export of wheat, wool and mineral resources has come up against an iceberg—the changed structure of the world market.

Export earnings fell because it turned out that Australian factories, which had for a long time been sheltered by protectionist barriers, were unable to produce competitive goods. And the Australians themselves preferred to buy imported machine tools, computers, cars, household appliances and clothing. The value of the Australian dollar began to fall. As a result a huge budget deficit was formed and the country's external debt increased.

Last year's budget was revised with an eye to these difficulties, and cuts were made in allocations for the social services—the public health service, education, science and culture. The government persuaded the trade unions to suspend demands for wage increases.

But the situation has failed to show any improvement since the past year. Inflation is running at over 9 per cent, prices of prime necessities are continuing to rise uncontrolled, and the standard of living of families living on wages or state subsidies has deteriorated noticeably.

In this situation, and with a general election approaching, the right has stepped up its activities. It is led by the populist politician Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, Prime Minister of the agricultural state of Queensland, which, incidentally, is the most backward and conservative of Australia's states. His election fund has already reached a total of Austr. $25 million—six times more than was spent by all the political parties together in the 1983 election campaign.

Britain plus America

Significantly, the right has borrowed all its political recipes from Reagan and Thatcher. An Australian journalist once observed that Australia is a synthesis of Britain and America.

Let us look at this assessment more carefully. Up to 1901 Australia was a British colony. To this day it is a British dominion, as it recognizes the authority of the British Crown and has a Governor-General in Canberra representing Queen Elizabeth II. Right up to the second world war, the Australian authorities sought London's approval for almost every political step. This habit continued in the postwar period as well, and led at times to disastrous results. For instance, Australia was one of the first countries to produce digital computers and sell them on the world market. But unsure of the wisdom of investing capital in this field, the Australians decided to consult Britain. They were advised to stick to the production of wool, meat and wheat, advice they unfortunately followed. I saw the documentary serial "Last Chance for the Lucky Country" on TV. It dealt with the old Australian inferiority complex, the belief that other countries did everything better than they did. According to the makers of the serial, the Australians had for a long time tried to avoid anything original, or unfamiliar, preferring to keep to things that had been tried and tested. "A nearsighted policy for which the country is now paying the price" (from the narrator's text of the serial).

Times, however, change. The once strong links between Australia and Britain are wearing thin. Australians are trying to stress their independence from the "Old Country" and even planning to change their flag, which today retains, in addition to the Southern Cross, a miniature Union Jack in the top left-hand corner. Australia's national colours are gold, white and bright green. Those are the colours worn by Australian athletes at international contests. Designers, attracted by the dazzling prizes offered by the powerful Ozflag lobbying group, are trying to combine these colours with the image of a kangaroo—the country's national mascot. The lobby intends to choose the best design and then persuade the federal government to change the flag. It's true that some wits are suggesting a simpler solution—replacing the Union Jack with the American Stars and Stripes, as that, they hold, would correspond better to Australia's orientation in the outside world. There is more than a grain of truth in this bitter joke.

Australia remains Washington's faithful ally in the ANZUS pact, designed to turn the South Pacific region into an "American lake." Despite the growing public movement against American military bases, the government insists they are necessary to defend the country, although it is obvious that in the event of nuclear war they would turn Australia into a target for a retaliatory strike. Today too Canberra is manifesting its loyalty to ANZUS, especially after New Zealand's virtual withdrawal from the pact. On major world issues, Canberra tends to wait for Washington to make its stand known, and only then take this or that step.

The relations that have developed between the two countries are largely due to the strength and power of American capital. The policy of blocs pursued by Washington during the years of the cold war paved the way for Amercan monopolies in countries where they had not yet taken root. Australia was no exception. The Americans have largely succeeded in ousting British capital. They make the most of the Australian inferiority complex and buy up inventions and discoveries by Australian scientists that their own weakened national economy cannot fully exploit.

Throughout Australia, and especially in the big cities, the signs of Americanization are evident—from the increasing number of skyscrapers in which local branches of multinational corporations and banks have their offices down to the "McDonaldization" of Australian food, and of course the American programmes that have flooded commercial TV stations.

Canberra and Washington also have many points of contact in international affairs. Certain aspects of Canberra's foreign policy indicate clearly that not all the country's leaders are prepared or able to think and act in keeping with the realities of the nuclear and space age.

The myth of a "Soviet threat" persists in the minds of Australian politicians, especially those on the right (in opposition to the Labour government today stand the Liberals and the National Party).

Having its own say

Mikhail Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech last July was the subject of serious discussion in both parliament and the press. On the one hand, Canberra could not fail to react positively to the Soviet Union's constructive proposals for a reliable security system in the region. On the other, there were some people who seemed to think the Vladivostok initiative might mean that the Soviet Union wanted to establish a military presence in the region.

In the upshot, Canberra made plans to set up the second navy, to be deployed in the Indian Ocean.

This decision evoked a storm of criticism of the government: this was certainly not the best moment for such a step, which, according to the most conservative estimates, would cost the country Austr. $8 billion.

In 1985 the Soviet Union signed (for only one year) a fishing agreement with the independent island state of Kiribati, followed by a similar agreement with the Republic of Vanuatu. And although the purely commercial nature of the agreement with Kiribati became obvious when it was not prolonged because of poor catches, Canberra nevertheless tried to scare the Vanuatu government with the "Red threat."

When the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze recently visited Australia, he again assured Prime Minister Robert Hawke and Foreign Minister William Hayden that Soviet policy carries no threat to the region. Moscow hopes to develop mutually advantageous trade and cooperation in all fields, other than military. Australian officials described Eduard Shevardnadze's visit as "extremely important." It resulted in the signing of a protocol on political consultations aimed at removing suspicion and mistrust in relations between the two countries. The two sides also agreed to promote trade and scientific and cultural contacts in every way. The results of the talks were met with approval by both the public and the mass media.

Britain + America = Australia? No. This formula does not correspond to the essence of either the national character or the national policy of a unique country, a continent that is increasingly determined to have its say in international affairs. Canberra's stand on nuclear disarmament, on halting nuclear tests and the "star wars" programme, and on decolonization has received well-deserved recognition. The Labour government can be justly proud of having signed the treaty on a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific. Canberra has opposed Washington's broad interpretation of the ABM treaty and welcomed the Soviet initiative on eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe. It is this policy aimed at peace and disarmament that is responsible for the country's growing influence in the world arena. And it is such a policy that an ever increasing number of Australians are calling for.

ALEXEI IVKIN

Sydney

A powder-monkey relationship

How it works

The recent annual meeting of the leaders of Canada and the United States had a particular significance for the Canadian government. Above all, for domestic reasons. Public support for the ruling Progressive Conservative Party, headed by Brian Mulroney, has declined to the catastrophically low level of 23 per cent as compared with 70 per cent at the time it came to power in September 1984. The Conservatives' electoral promise to create new jobs has remained on paper. In February the number of unemployed amounted to 1,335,000, or 9.6 per cent of the labour force. Indicative of the government's troubles is the fact that in less than three years seven cabinet ministers have either been dismissed or forced to resign.

The sharp drop in the popularity rating of the Conservatives is due also to the disillusionment of the Canadians in the government's ability to stand up for the national interests in its relations with the U.S. It was for this reason that during Reagan's visit the Conservatives sought to underscore the "special" nature of these relations, reanimate the protracted negotiations on free trade and obtain from the Americans a promise to carry out the earlier agreement on the joint financing of a programme to combat the "acid rains." The Mulroney government hoped in this way to bolster up its badly damaged prestige.

The "acid rains" are a stumbling block in U.S.-Canadian relations. Reagan announced that he was asking Congress to appropriate $2.5 billion for a five-year programme of research aimed at controlling the pollution of the atmosphere. Ottawa is demanding that the discharge of pollutants into the atmosphere from U.S. industrial enterprises be reduced by half. The President, on the other hand, merely wants to consider the question of concluding an agreement on the "acid rains" problem.

Another acute problem for Canada is its trade with the United States, the volume of which (about $120 billion a year) exceeds that of any other two countries in the world. The Prime Minister and the President discussed the prospects of concluding an agreement designed to remove tariffs and other barriers to the free flow of goods across the U.S.-Canadian frontier. But while the negotiations are going on, new customs duties and other restrictions on the import of traditional Canadian exports into the U.S. are being introduced. For their part, the Canadian trade unions, some provincial authorities and also some companies are opposed to free trade on the grounds that it holds out the threat of entire industries being wound up, with the consequent increase in unemployment.

The differences between the two neighbours are considerable. On the eve of Reagan's visit Mulroney said he did not expect any significant progress on a single item on the agenda of the meeting. And he proved to be right. No concrete agreements were reached.

Foreign policy occupies an important place in the "special relations" between the U.S. and Canada.

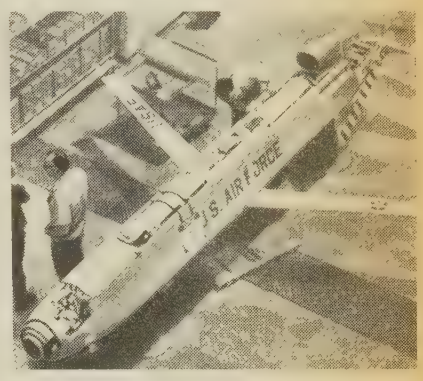
According to Foreign Minister Joseph Clark, the meetings and talks between the Prime Minister and President Reagan give Canada an opportunity to influence Washington's position on arms control. Is that really the case? Or is the reverse?

Canada, Mulroney said in parliament during the Reagan visit, is situated between two superpowers. The Canadian people are deeply disturbed by the arms race and inspired by the prospects of its reduction. If the United States and the Soviet Union could conclude an agreement on eliminating medium- and short-range missiles, this could lead to reductions in other types of weapons, the Prime Minister stressed.

But what is the Canadian government doing to achieve this objective?

U.S. air-based long-range cruise missiles were tested recently in Canada. A U.S.-Canadian agreement on the testing of cruise missiles was concluded in 1983 under a Liberal government which invoked its commitments to NATO. Now this agreement has been automatically prolonged for another five years. This was done with the tacit consent of the parliamentary Liberal Party, although the Liberal convention held in November 1986 adopted a resolution on making Canada a non-nuclear zone and on ending tests.

In prolonging the agreement, the Conservative government made no mention of the fact that its conclusion had been made conditional on observance of the Soviet-American SALT-2 and ABM treaties. In the opinion of John Lamb, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, now that the U.S. administration has violated the SALT-2 treaty and insists on a "broad interpretation" of the ABM treaty, the Canadian government has every right not to consider itself bound by the agreement on testing. However, the Conservative government argues that to terminate the testing of this type of weapon would at the present moment



Cruise missile: assembled at the Boeing plant in the U.S., tested in Canada.
From Newsweek (U.S.)

be detrimental to the Western countries and have a negative effect on the American-Soviet disarmament talks.

In another statement Brian Mulroney declared that Canada was not a superpower, its policy had no nuclear dimension, there were no nuclear weapons on Canadian territory and that as long as the present government was in office there would not be any. But it looks as if Canada's southern neighbour is of a different opinion. According to press reports, the U.S. Air Force has drawn up plans for the use, "in emergencies," of a Canadian Air Force base at Cold Lake, Alberta, for the deployment of B-52 nuclear bombers in forward positions.

These reports evoked a storm of indignation in the Canadian parliament, as did the sensational statement by Joseph Clark on December 1, 1986, that there were some 300 Soviet submarines in Canadian waters. For this reason, Clark noted, Canada remains a strong NATO supporter. Somewhat later, prompted doubtless by Minister

of National Defence Perrin Beatty, Clark explained he meant to say there were 375 Soviet submarines capable of operating in Canadian waters. Beatty, for his part, observed at a press conference that he was unable to confirm a single instance of intrusion of Soviet submarines in Canadian territorial waters.

Likewise of interest is Canada's position on SDI. Ottawa speaks of the need for strict observance of the provisions of the ABM treaty. In September 1985 it refused to participate at government level in the realization of the SDI programme. But it left the door open for private firms, which lost no time in taking advantage of this opportunity.

In March 1985, at a meeting in Quebec in the framework of NORAD (North American Aerospace Defence Command), Mulroney and Reagan signed an agreement on the establishment of a northern early warning system against a missile attack, providing for the construction of 52 radar stations in the northernmost regions of Canada.

Canada's formal refusal to participate in SDI is hardly consonant with the official report that the Ministry of National Defence has received government permission for the conduct of research and a series of tests under the programme for the establishment in outer space of a network of radar installations for the protection of the northern regions of Canada against cruise missiles.

The clause that figured until 1981 in the bilateral agreement on NORAD, stating Canada's refusal to participate in measures to organize an active ABM system, was omitted when the agreement was prolonged. This means that the Canadian government allows the U.S. to extend eventually its early warning system under NORAD to the dimensions of an ABM system. The groundwork is thus being laid for the creation, with Canada's undeclared participation, of a large-scale ABM system with space-based elements. What is in question, therefore, is the possible involvement of Canada in the "star wars" programme.

* * *

"Peacemaker or Powder-Monkey" is the title of a book by James Minifie published in Canada. The author poses the question of a choice facing the country: will Canada take the road of peaceful coexistence or will it obediently follow in the wake of its powerful southern neighbour? The message of the book is that the Canadians have an option that accords with their national interests—refusal to play the part of a powder-monkey.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the book was published. But the questions it raises are as timely as ever.

VLADIMIR ULASEVICH

In the phrase "It's worth its weight in gold," the word "gold" could well be replaced by "paper"—the bank note has all but ousted the gold coin from money circulation over the past hundred years. However, the undivided sway of paper on the market is now coming to an end. In industrialized capitalist countries paper is steadily losing ground to plastic, with the microcomputer probably coming next.

Borrowing from a computer

VLADIMIR KASHIN

"Can you travel around the world without a cent in your pockets? Yes, you can—and not only travel, but stay in the best hotels and buy whatever takes your fancy." This is an excerpt from an advertisement promoting the Visa and Mastercard credit cards that have perceptibly pushed back hard cash and cheque books as negotiable currency. Cheque books are a privilege of the wealthy few; credit cards are anyone's for the asking.

The "plastic money" era has not come to stay either: the papers are already heralding the era of "electronic money" when all one will have to do by way of paying for goods or services is touch a cash register panel with one's finger tip or say one's name aloud. A computer will instantly identify the client by his fingerprints or vocal timbre and draw the money from his bank account.

Credit, debit and automatic tills

"Plastic money" stems from the old practice of small shopkeepers selling goods to their regular customers on credit and entering their debts in an account book. This kind of crediting did not do for larger businesses, still less for trading companies running hundreds of department stores nationwide. So they started issuing their regular customers with "identification cards" of sorts in the shape of credit cards, which entitled patrons to make purchases in any of the company's chain stores, with payments to be made biweekly or monthly. Spending was encouraged by discounts and premiums for very expensive purchases. Tourist companies and gas stations also started crediting their customers. Credit cards thus became a new form of crediting regular clientele, once a service traditionally obtainable only from banks.

This competition compelled bankers to set up automatic cash points at airports, hotels and large department stores. The cashpoints issued ready money to clients at any time of day or night. In order to get the cash just when he needed it, a client was supposed to carry a plastic debit card with his special tape-recorded code press-fitted into it. These "banks without tellers" became immensely popular in the U.S., Western Europe and Japan overnight, prompting bankers to introduce a new consumer credit system.

Normally, banks granted credits not to buyers but to traders who cashed in on loan interest on retail sales. Drawing upon the experience they had gained in debit-card operations, banks launched a massive issue of credit cards guaranteeing, at their own risk, immediate payment for the goods and services their clients buy. A client was supposed to clear the debt within a month; failure to do so incurred added interest on the loan and, with the debt still outstanding, a stoppage of further payments against the card.

What is a credit card? It is a plastic rectangle bearing a serial number, the owner's name, a specimen of his signature, and the duration of the card's validity. Shops that accept credit cards make out a bill for a purchase to the issuing bank. The card bearer has to sign the bill so that the sales person can match the signature against the

specimen on the card. In suspect cases, a sales person can ask the charge customer to show his papers. These precautions do not rule out cases of fake or long-expired cards being used. At an expert estimate, cheats swindle the banks of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. By 1990 the bank associations using the Visa and Mastercard credit cards alone will have lost about two billion dollars in this way. That is why bankers are taking every measure to protect themselves.

One measure is to code the bearer's signature on the magnetic tape press-fitted into the card. Sometimes, a special cipher known to the bearer only is coded, or a holographic image superimposed on it. A patch of special material bearing the card owner's likeness reproducible by means of a laser beam only is also press-fitted into the card. These are only a few of the sophisticated anti-forgery techniques banks resort to.

Built-in intelligence

For all the technical problems involved, "plastic money" has become fairly widespread over the past few years, although the proportion of those using it is still relatively low: 18 per cent in the U.S., and about 4 per cent in Britain. Commodities rarely bought on "plastic credit" so far include food products and consumer durables—homes, cars, TV sets, which can be paid for in instalments—as well as shares and other securities. Credit cards are current mostly in the middle class. The poor have no bank accounts, as a rule, and the rich prefer cheque books.

In order to attract the wealthy, bankers started issuing so-called prestige cards. American Express, for instance, has put gold cards into circulation in Britain, intended for those with annual incomes of not less than 25,000 pounds. The gold card was followed by the still more expensive platinum card. In order to keep up with their competitor, the Trusthouse Forte hotel company and the Barclays and the National Westminster banks have come up with similar cards. At the same time banks, tourist and trading companies are seeking ways of making "plastic credit" universal, bringing expense, debit and credit cards together into a single system.

The invention of the so-called "smart" card marked the first step on the way. This is a piece of plastic with a microprocessor (chip) press-fitted into it. Such cards were pioneered by Roland Moreno back in the early 1970s. It took about a decade to devise the technique for making them, and already in 1983 "smart" cards had begun to make their way into the consumer credit system. The new card's chief advantage is a much larger storage capacity (8,000 bits as against the conventional card's 72). This is enough to hold information about the client, the state of his bank account, and all his payments. A special fake-proof code is press-fitted into the "smart" card. Another advantage of the new card is that it obviates the need for costly shop-bank communication facilities because the card itself indicates what sum the client's credit is still good for.

Such cards are already mass-produced by France's Bull company (at the rate of about 10 million a year). In Japan, the Casio company recently began to put them into quantity production. Public telephones are already being switched over from coin to "smart" card operation. By way of an experiment, "smart" cards are accepted by a number of tollhouses. The French government has decided to go further than that: it has been introducing the "plastic credit" system on a wide scale since 1986; about 16 million cards will be in circulation towards the end of 1988, and in 1990 the figure will come to 20 million (which almost equals the number of French families). This credit system will embrace 350,000 trading companies, banks and service establishments, with about 50,000 of them to be in direct communication with bank computers.

Competition between banks in the credit card market is fierce. "Did they think we would hand them our market on a silver platter?" Raoul Bellanger, president of the French Groupement des Cartes Bancaires, wonders.

From Business Week (U.S.)

So far France leads the world in the spread of "plastic credit." National credit systems of this kind are to be introduced in Britain (as from 1988), Luxemburg, Belgium, Denmark and Norway. (Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and China will confine themselves to the use of ordinary cards for the time being.) By the year 1990, the U.S. and Japan are to produce an estimated 500 million and 100 million "smart" cards respectively, which, however, will not be introduced on a national scale, but offered by individual banks to their clients. American banks have already invested fairly heavily in operations involving conventional credit cards and will have to cover these expenses before they change over to "smart" cards.

A "pocket bank"

Technological progress has not stopped at that, however. A new wonder-card, referred to by its creators as "super-smart" because its data storage capacity is greater still, has already been developed. It combines all the merits of conventional credit cards, registers its bearer's financial operations, and has enough room in its memory for a host of data, such as contributions to the social security fund, blood group and other indicators relating to the bearer's state of health.

Most importantly, the "super-smart" card does not depend on external electronic gear for its functioning. It has its own data input keys, a miniature disk, and is battery-powered. It is a microcomputer in its own right complete with all the software it needs—a personal bank, as it were, that fits into the palm of one's hand. A client can put in, process, and retrieve any data. Information fed into the card by the creditor bank is protected by a special code, as are the expenditure limits the bank sets. Each time the card owner contacts his bank's master computer (when drawing cash, making a purchase, etc.) new information on the state of his bank account is entered in the card's memory.

Nor is the "super-smart" card the last word in technology. The Drexler Technology Corp. of California has developed a laser card for Japan's Sumitomo Bank with a storage capacity of two million bits (800 closely-spaced typewritten pages). Such a card will cost a mere $2.5 to make—less than a "smart" card does—but its capabilities will be truly unlimited.

What is fostering the card boom? The profit motive, of course. Besides the high "plastic credit" interest rate (over 20 per cent, as a rule), the bank charges every client about $15-20 a year for using the card. The profits bankers make on "plastic crediting" are much in excess of what they earn on other forms of crediting. Such profits can be obtained, however, only by banks capable of running a nationwide credit-card service, which costs millions of dollars to establish. Of the hundreds of banks comprising the Visa and Mastercard

crediting associations, nationwide crediting operations can be afforded by only 20, such as the Citibank, Bank of America, First Chicago International, Chase Manhattan, Wells Fargo, and the like.

Heavily as bankers charge them, "plastic credit" is convenient and profitable to their clients. First of all, they get a loan in excess of their actual credit. In the U.S., for instance, only a third of credit card owners clear their debts on time, the rest permanently failing to do so. As a result, the accruing interest outstandings on "plastic credit" bring the banks a profit of $65 billion a year. The chief advantage of the "plastic credit" card is that buyers find it more convenient to borrow from a computer. This spares them the trouble of negotiating a loan with a banker, fumbling for cash in a shop or a hotel, exchanging their money for local currencies when crossing borders, and so on.

"Plastic credit" means not only extra profit to bankers and extra convenience for their clients. It speeds up money transactions considerably, reduces trading costs, and rationalizes banking. It has imparted a mass scale to clearing, an account-settling practice long accepted in the business world. Among the socio-psychological consequences the spread of credit cards has brought is the undermining of the fetishistic attitude to gold coins and bank notes. After all, it makes no sense to hoard plastic cards and "salt them away." Although credit cards perform the function of money, they are not money but negotiable instruments like letters of credit or bank cheques.

The introduction of "plastic credit" has as its main economic consequence under capitalism still greater centralization and concentration of monetary operations in the hands of a handful of large banks. Technological progress compels them to get a national credit system under way regardless of competition. Thus the new form of clearing produced by the "information industry" leads to the centralization of the private banking system catering to the distribution of an ever greater proportion of the national wealth.

A circulation booster

Naturally, the economic effect of "plastic money" depends on the scale of its acceptance as payment for commodities and services. The socialist economic system, which uses commodity-money relations as a means of stepping up production efficiency and ensuring a fair distribution of public wealth according to each citizen's work, can make more effective use of this financial innovation than the capitalist system.

Under socialism, the banking system is centralized and free of interbank competition and the concomitant non-productive losses in money circulation. In our case, money circulation produces no fictitious capital, which devalues money and enriches big financiers. The use of "plastic" and other forms of "electronic" money in the course of the economic reform now in progress will make it possible to create an all-embracing system of control over the correlation between labour input and the consumption rate. Keeping tabs on each citizen's revenues and expenditures as indicated by his uniform bank account will make it virtually impossible to conceal unearned income. "Plastic credit" will also provide the technical means of gearing production to demand, with the result that the manufacturers of fast-selling products will be better off financially than those whose output finds no market.

The introduction of electronic money circulation and accounting will accelerate commodity and money turnover in the national economy. This will certainly call for computer centres with terminals in banks, savings banks, factories and shops, for the steady production of credit cards themselves, and for expert personnel. Such a restructuring of the account-settling and crediting mechanism will necessitate great expenses and considerable organizing effort. At the same time it is obvious that the computerization of the national economy is a short- rather than a long-term objective, and that "plastic credit" arrangements could well be included in the multipurpose data systems now in the making.

The economic and social effect of "plastic credit" will justify all the expenses involved in introducing it. Computerization of monetary operations and their complete changeover to clearing will make it possible to automate control over credit and monetary policy and budget execution at national, republican and local levels, bring more order and system into accounting at industrial plants and in organizations, increase discipline in payment and consolidate the principle of self-support in the national economy. The extension of clearing to the entire sphere of commodity-money relations will also help improve economic assessments. "Pocket banks" will also afford the population wide access to economic data, medical institutions, libraries and archives, i.e., make the population better informed in all fields of economic and public life, and provide conditions for its further democratization.

Under socialism the interests of the state, banks, industrial plants and other organizations do not clash with those of the population at large. The extra commodity and money reserves mobilized by means of "plastic credit" will not serve to draw on the population's funds for the benefit of a handful of big financiers and state-monopoly groupings. Speeding up the turnover of commodity-money resources by the introduction of "plastic money" may be a way of raising the efficiency of social production and improving welfare standards. ■

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A theatre is born

On October 28, 1974, 49 Moscow senior-grade pupils went to their first lesson at the studio of the Sovremennik (Contemporary) Theatre. Oleg Tabakov, who headed the theatre at the time, proceeded, together with his comrades—actors and directors—to teach the youngsters histrionic art. Two years later the most promising of the group were enrolled in Tabakov's course at the State Institute of Dramatic Art.

The task the studio set itself at the time was to rear a new generation of actors for the Sovremennik, a generation that could speak from the stage about the problems agitating the youth. In 1979, in the basement of a house on Chaplygin Street, the third-year students gave their first première—a play by the young playwright Alexei Kazantsev, "I'll Come Back to You in Spring."

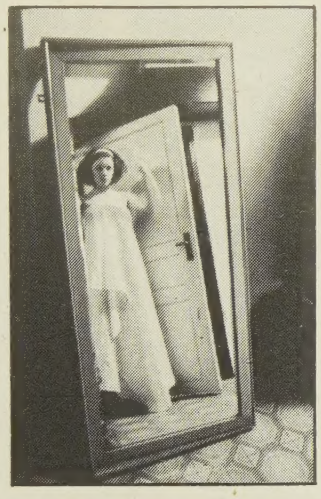
The studio built up its own repertoire, discovered new names and new drama forms. Among its productions were a composition by Konstantin Raikin entitled "Farewell, Mowgli!" and a philosophical parable, "Two Arrows," by Alexander Volodin. The play "The St. Barbara Passion" was written specially for the studio by the journalist and playwright Olga Kuchkina. The English writer Barrie Keeffe made it a gift of his play "Gotcha."

There have been 12 premières since then. Before long it came to be as difficult to acquire a ticket for a performance on Chaplygin Street as for the Sovremennik itself. A professional theatre company had come into being; the old studio framework was no longer adequate. In 1980 an attempt was made to create a theatre on the basis of the studio. But it did not work. High hopes gave way to despair. It seemed at times that it was only the energy and optimism of Tabakov himself that kept the studio going.

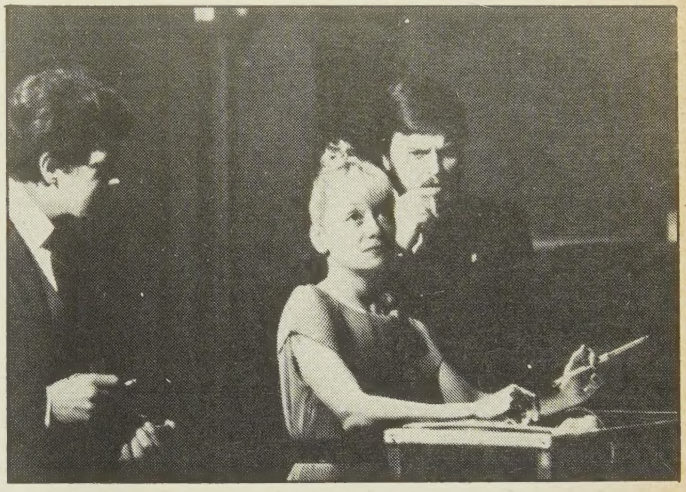
But now at last the day has come—the birthday of the new Moscow Studio Theatre. And Oleg Tabakov donned his dress suit....

Photos by A. Zemlyanichenko

Lobby of the studio theatre on Chaplygin Street.

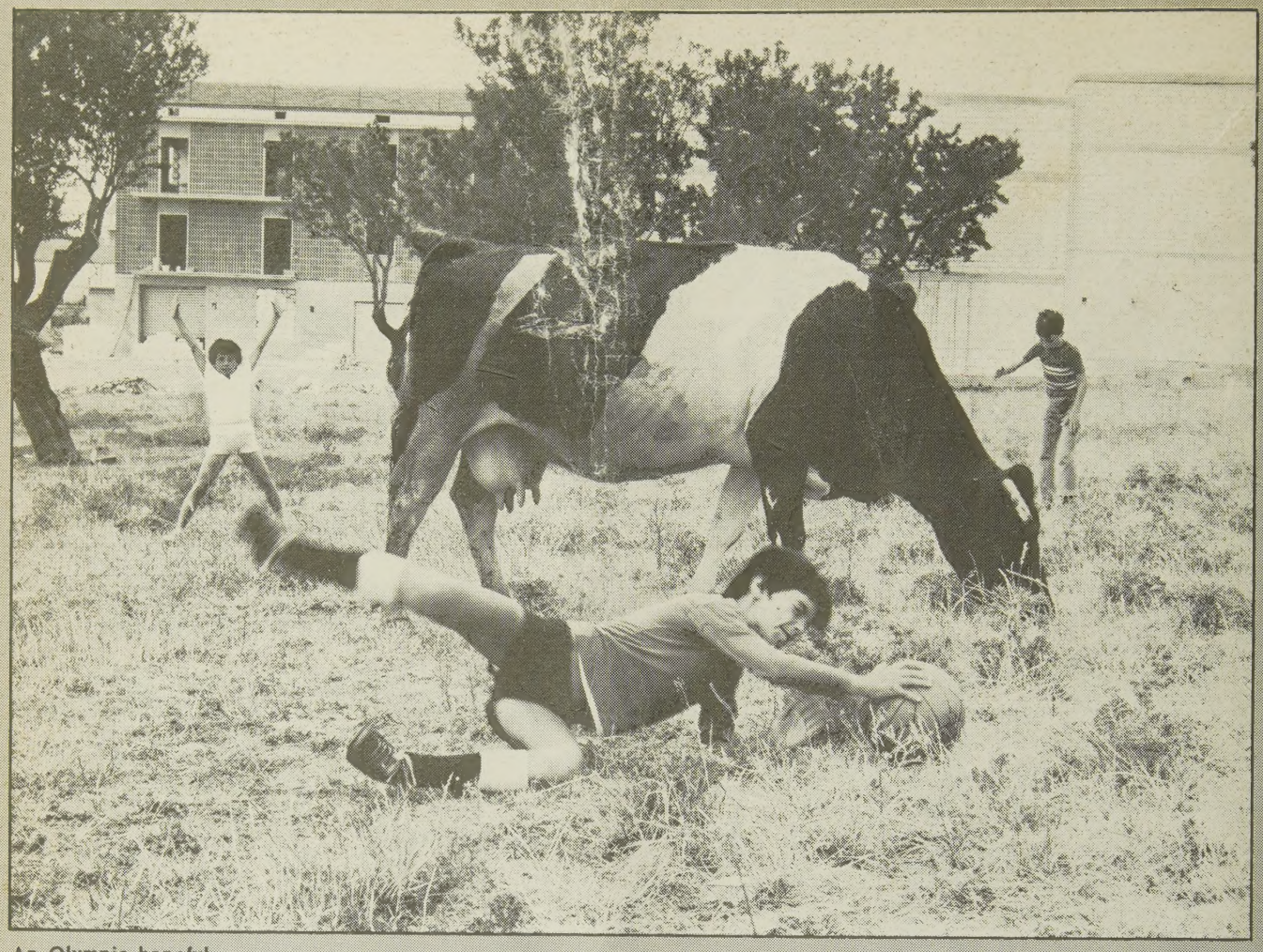


Backstage just before the curtain rises.



The new theatre's first première, "The Chair," a play by Alexander Marin and Yuri Polyakov.

The birthday...



An Olympic hopeful.

Alfred La Piccirella (Italy)

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

Tomas Mora Ruata (Spain)

Pavement drummers.

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